The Jewel of Ynys Galon

BY

Owen Rhoscomyl

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WITH 12 ILLUSTRATIONS BY LANCELOT SPEED

NEW EDITION

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To

Every boy who ever stored up stale crusts and hoarded his pocket-money with a view to presently annexing the family carving-knife and stealing forth to become a bloodthirsty pirate: the terror of the seas—

To

Every man who in the toil and struggle for subsistence looks back with fond regret to the days when he still believed in buried treasure and dreamed of one day discovering some hoard whereby to become rich beyond imagination—

And finally to

Every one whose blood rouses at a tale of tall fights and perilous adventure—

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BY THE AUTHOR

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PREFACE.

To the ordinary English-reading public it may appear somewhat strange to find pirates located in Wales. That, however, must be laid to the account of the writers of fiction, and not to that of the chroniclers of fact. A merely casual eye, running over the pedigrees of the families of note bordering the Welsh coasts, will scarcely fail to find, in the majority of cases, one or more instances of fine, imprisonment, or outlawry suffered for the crime of piracy upon the high seas. Some of these punishments were inflicted to satisfy the clamours of foreign ambassadors at the English Court, notably in early Stuart days, while at a comparatively late date special measures were taken to put down the Welsh pirates and to clear out their nests in the chief ports, amongst which Cardiff is especially mentioned. Further, I have but to mention that very pink and pattern of what may be called the aristocracy of the buccaneers,

Sir Henry Morgan of fierce memory to wit, to show with what strong advantages I stand begirt in submitting this book to the public.

Having thus, to a certain extent, cleared the ground, I leave the reader to make a closer acquaintance with such specimens of the race as are hereinafter presented.

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THE JEWEL OF YNYS GALON.

INTRODUCTION.

A WISE SAW AND A MODERN INSTANCE.

THE use of old saws is reckoned by some to betray a poverty of intellect in the user. I do not here intend to enter into any argument upon the point, though I fancy I could bring some very nice details to bear upon it.

Behold, however, the beauty of a formula so complete as to prompt its application, century in, century out, to the wisdom of successive governments as they move clickety-clacking down the ages, after the usual manner of machines with screws loose. The wise saw in point touches the matter of "locking the stable door after the steed is stolen" and the modern instance will explain the birth of this book. For the tale herein told would have been vastly more worthy of the reader's attention had the Welsh Manuscripts Commission been appointed as many years ago as it can reckon days.

You see, my wrath is excusable. A certain young heir succeeding to the estate of an elderly cousin, decided that the hall was not good enough to entertain and lodge his greatness. He must have a sale of the furniture and contents, and therefore the auctioneer was summoned at once to catalogue the whole. Mouldering away in a damp and musty garret a pile of old parchments was discovered; and, being asked as to what should be done with these, the heir, or the solicitor, or the auctioneer, or somebody, gave the order to carry them out and burn them, as not being worth selling. No! nobody had an apoplectic fit, and yet this vandal order was carried out. The parchments gave a lot of trouble, however, and smouldered on for days, and when I attended the sale with an eye to certain specimens of carved oak I happened to see the pile and, out of curiosity, to pick up a bulky parcel bound roughly into volume form.

It was lying open a few feet away from the outer edge of the pyre and sparks had lodged between many of the leaves, scorching or eating through them till pretty nearly half its pages were undecipherable. It proved to consist of two separate manuscripts, one, the earliest, written in Welsh

and dated in the first quarter of the last century: the other, a rendering of the first into English, done half a century or so later.

"Oh yes, I could take the old rubbish: I might have had all the rest if I had come before and offered to cart it away," said somebody — whom I felt a fierce desire to slaughter — and accordingly I am able to bring to the notice of the public a story which interested me most marvellously.

And here I wish to explain the difficulty I had in preparing it for publication. The first manuscript appeared to have been written by Ivor Meyric immediately after the occurrence of the adventures related therein and, most probably, in the short interval between the last scene on the cromlech and his departure for London upon receiving the commission which his many excellencies had moved the lord-lieutenant to procure for him. The second, and English version, was written, as its own pages testify, when Sir Ivor Meyric, Bart., retired Colonel of Horse, had fallen into old age and come to looking at things from another point of view. Accordingly I found the latter to be a very free rendering indeed of the former, altogether toned down and, in a manner, bowdlerised! as we have since learnt to say. In

the first all the old Pagan rites and bloody superstitions stalk unchecked across the pages, dabbling with gory fingers their freest passages. In the second an attempt is made to ignore them, saving where absolutely necessary to an understanding of the narrative, and even then to mutilate them so as to make it difficult reading to one unacquainted with the previous account. Add to this that whole pages of each were burnt out and that, while sometimes the one MS. could supply the missing chapters of the other, yet there were places where both were irretrievably damaged and I was forced to painfully recognise a word or paragraph here and there and then apply my wits to restoring the whole in line with the spirit of the remainder. This I succeeded in doing in what, I flattered myself, was a very passable manner; but here again I was confronted by the difference in spirit of the two versions. Not to be baulked, however, I resolved to reconstruct the tale entirely, making a suitable translation of the Welsh MS.: giving as many passages as possible from the English one, and piecing out the whole with my own ideas of the missing parts.

Thus the reader has before him a tale consisting of the handiwork of three different people. First

the young half-pagan schoolboy, Ivor ap Griffith ap Howel; second Colonel Sir Ivor Meyric, Bart., of Dolgoch, and lastly of your very humble servant, the writer of this introduction.

Under these circumstances the public will readily understand why this book appears without any author's name upon the title-page and, in respect of whatever appreciation it may win, will allow me to bow an acknowledgment in the name of each and every one of the three above indicated.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH A GREAT PERSONAGE COMES HOME.

In the last fifty years or so, so many tales have grown up, each one differing from another, about the finding of the treasure on Ynys Galon, that at last I think it time to set forth the real facts of the case that the world may be no longer misled. I am the readier to follow this course for that I am now come nigh to the threescore years and ten of the royal Psalmist, and have a wish to put matters straight on this point before it be too late. The story here following then can be relied on and though, perhaps, it may lack somewhat of the marvellous and rich colouring of the corrupted versions, yet, in sober truth, I thought at the time of its happening — and do still think — that it is both marvellous and rich enough in tint to satisfy any plain, honest man. Such as find it otherwise I must refer, if they be Welshmen, to the old tales of the Mabinogion, or, if they be English, then to the wonderful stories with which the poor scrib-

blers do edify their patrons in London town; the while they themselves starve upon the proceeds thereof — which last I think must ofttimes stimulate their imaginations by the bitterness of the contrast betwixt what they do create and their own circumstances.

Further, touching this tale of mine, I have a wish to combat a most absurd contention, and one very strongly held by the commoner sort in these parts, namely, that Henry Morgan, the terror and scourge of the Spanish Main that we hear so much of, is none other than the Meyric Ddu ap Morgan mentioned in these pages, so famous in his day throughout Spanish America as "Dew the Buccaneer." But this contention will be relegated to its proper limbo by the intelligent reader ere he finishes this unvarnished history, and I shall be heartily thanked for saving him from giving credence to so idle a tale as the one aforesaid.

So much by way of foreword, and now to begin.

At that time I was a stout lad of seventeen or thereabouts, hearty and well grown, and, as I think, come pretty well to my full strength. I have no doubt that I was as conceited a young blade as ever imagined himself a man before the down had had time to darken on his upper lip or

he could think of one thing for two days together. Nevertheless I was only a boy for all that, since, look you, instead of coming out on top at the school to which I had been sent and passing to the University with honour, as my father expected, I was just newly expelled from that school and was sitting on the box-seat of the coach, on my way home, wondering, between my fruitless attempts at persuading the coachman to let me drive, what sort of a reception I should receive from my father.

Not that I felt any very great fear of the meeting; I knew my father too well. He was a rough, bluff country gentleman of Wales, whose pedigree was as long as his rent roll was short; for he could never fall in with the new notion that one's people should be tenants rather than friends, and that a tenant was a person who paid a fixed yearly sum or made way for somebody else who would. No, he could shoot a line straighter than ever he could have drawn one, even to please old Euclid himself, and could a vast deal easier total up the points of a horse or dog and express it in terms of worth, than he could have done by a column of figures. So long as there was plenty of "cwrw da" in the kitchen

and a drop of something more decent in the dining-room, with genial neighbours sharing both, he cared little for what might happen beyond the county, and it would have required one of the Jacobite risings, so freely whispered about over the goblets and tankards, to have roused him.

To this must be added that he had married my mother when he was forty and she was half that age, and, when I was born, she died. He felt the loss so much that he never cared about looking for another wife, and had let me grow up under the care of the whole population of the parish, for he could not say "no" to any one where I was concerned, and my foster-mother, or nurse rather, having also died when I had scarce begun to walk, there was no one else to claim authority. You can, therefore, conceive that I was spoiled something of the completest, being the subject of endless scheming among the old wives of the place, who each wished to monopolise my company.

One person, perhaps, might have stood out if she had been less tender-hearted, and that was the lady, a cousin of my father's as we reckon kinship in Wales, who upon my mother's death undertook the duties of housekeeper in my father's house

in Dolgoch. But, as I say, she was too tender-hearted.

Again, there was the parson and he was supposed to have my education in hand, but I proved so froward a pupil and so diligent only in devising ways and means of escaping my studies, that at length he was fain to give up in despair and advise my father to ship me off to some school where they would speedily find a fashion of pinning me down to my books. And thus it came about that I entered the school from which I was now expelled, a school situated in a rich, fair county of England, away and away from the cliffs and the shining sea and the pleasant folk of Pwllwen; though perhaps it was these last I missed most in the new days when fagging galled me sorest.

Nevertheless at that school the boys soon got to respecting me as one who would fight whenever there was need, and before long I was a recognised exponent and top "man" in that line, more especially at wrestling, the proud consciousness of which helped me the better to bear the degradation of my position at the bottom, when we were assembled during the hours of learning.

For I was a woful dunce, having been already so far behind when I entered school. And per-

IVOR IS EXPELLED

haps that is the reason why, in the reading of this story, you shall miss so much the polish and style which otherwise you had a right to expect from one who received his education at the best school in the land.

But it was the buffeting and the wrestling of which I was so proud that was the final undoing of me in this matter of my education. It came about that when, as I said before, I ought to have been near ready, according to the miscalculation of my father, to pass on to the University, I must needs fall foul of another "man" of my own age but of vastly superior scholastic attainments and a great favourite with the masters to boot. It does not matter how it arose, as it proved to be all a mistake, but I turned to and thrashed him so handsomely that there was strong prospect of his missing his examination; wherein he was to have brought so great credit upon the whole school. Nor was that all of my offending, for I was so puffed up with conceit of my handiwork as to answer most unmannerly when the master took me to task upon the point; and so grievous was my carriage during that interview, that, in the result, I was expelled at short shift: as I have previously intimated. And here let me say by

way of comment, that in after years I often had occasion to regret having made so little use of my opportunities of education at that school.

But at the time I sat on that front seat of the coach I should have scorned the bare idea of coming to such regrets, and I was infinitely more concerned at the obduracy of the driver in refusing to let me handle the ribbons. The more so as we should soon come in sight of the town of Gaerwen, where I must leave the coach and with it my last opportunity of driving one, so far as I could see at present.

And this dire thing did actually come to pass; for, as we drew up in front of the Cross Foxes, I had to seek the level of the pavement with my ambition unfulfilled, the disappointment of which reduced me to such a state of heat and disgust that I turned to the nearest loafer and directed him to take my box inside to the best room of the inn, at the same time ostentatiously tossing him a sovereign. The coachman saw the coin and his eyes twinkled greedily, whereupon I turned my back upon him and marched off in my most lordly fashion, now really angry, for I saw that had I offered a bribe on the road I could have attained my great desire. And this made my gorge rise,

for I could never abide meanness or to have a favour done me for the money it would bring: which is indeed no favour, but a mere sordid merchandising of good will and affection.

Mine host, of course, knew me well and therefore my empty pockets did not trouble me so far as he was concerned. For you are to understand that, barring a few shillings and coppers, the sovereign was the last money I had; so that temper had reduced me to poverty, since otherwise a shilling would have been quite ample reward for the carrying of one almost empty box from the coach to the best room. And so, I suspect, that loafer thought, for he disappeared instantly the job was done and was no more seen during my short stay in the place.

Now so hastily had I been sent down from the school that I did not expect my father to have sent the lumbering family coach for me and had accordingly made up my mind to post or, better still, to ride. But this last did not commend itself to mine host of the Cross Foxes. I shrewdly suspect that he was the wiser for one or more experiences of the after-condition of saddle horses when hired to irresponsible young gentlemen on the way home from school. At any rate he fell in at once so com-

pletely with the post-chaise idea as left me no room to amplify upon the superiority of the other, and I was fain to yield apparently, mentally saving my purpose by deciding to change places with the postboy as soon as I should be well out of sight of Gaerwen. Next, I tried to persuade the landlord that my dignity required four horses, but that sympathetic soul hinted, in the most delicate manner possible, that perhaps my father — ahem! — a real gentleman he was and one of the old generous sort who never counted the items in a bill! In fine, my father might not approve of four horses, as savouring too much of display and, in a manner, aping the ways of the spies and Government creatures who had lately been cutting such a dash in those parts, when the Jacobite whispers had risen to an indiscreet pitch.

And, really now, a light chaise with a couple of good hackneys and a smart postboy would be just the style for a clever young gentleman returning from completing his education, and a credit I should no doubt be to my family and the country in general. In the end so mightily was I tickled with the pleasantness of his fine speeches that I quite decided to ride in the chaise all the way home, instead of exchanging with the boy, that

is to say until I reached the boundary of Pwllwen, when of course I should be in a manner bound to consult my own notions of what my position allowed.

It is vastly conducive to enjoyment to have one's vanity tickled with so light a feather and so skilful a touch as innkeepers for the most part command. Accordingly, after a very neat meal, and a bottle of something which I begged mine host to do me the favour of sharing, — and which, further, I sipped and tasted and smacked my lips over as if I had been an old connoisseur and it had come from the Duke of Beaufort's cellar or the King's at least, — the chaise was brought round and I got in. So well satisfied with the world in general and myself in particular was I that I delayed starting for a moment or two, airing my greatness by indulging in an affable conversation with the landlord, after the manner of the young gallants, and big wigs generally, whom I had envied many a time on my journeys to and from school. And mine host, with that knowledge of the weaknesses of travellers which is the gift of a true innkeeper, fooled me to the top of my bent, just as he had a few minutes before praised my judgment of wines when I smacked my lips

over the sherry, hinting that it could be nothing less than Amontillado; which strange name I had read in a book at school.

Finally, as condescendingly as you please, I nodded to the postboy and, with a grand wave of the hand to the landlord, my high mightiness was rattling away over the stones in commencement of a journey of twenty miles or so, along villainous roads, as I had loftily told the postboy, and with — what I had not told him — a dubious welcome at the farther end.

Now for the first and longest stage of the way I reckoned with my new dignity and kept my seat in the chaise, but with the change of horses my resolution slacked. Ahead of me and around I saw the old familiar mountains and landmarks, and my blood took to dancing so lightly that at the first decent turn of the road I called a halt and expressed my intention of exchanging places with the postboy; much to his astonishment. At first he flatly refused, but when I threatened to inflict all manner of dire punishments upon him he visibly wavered. Then I tried persuasion and finally he yielded, whereupon I emptied my last remaining coins into his hand and with a mollified grin he climbed up into the seat I had vacated, while

I leaped into the saddle. It is possible that those two horses had done some rollicking runs in their day, but even so I am still of opinion that they remembered that stage for some time afterwards. Sometimes we had three wheels on the ground at once, more often two, while it was seldom indeed that all four were in use at once. We flew round sharp bends, scaring cottagers' chickens out of a year's growth; we hummed along between hedges, raising dust enough to choke a cow; we drummed over bridges and through hamlets, attended by every dog in the neighbourhood, all barking like mad. It was a glorious time.

It struck me at length, however, that at this rate I should enter Pwllwen at some inglorious shamble or broken-down trot, which would have taken the polish off the whole proceedings; therefore, when we came to the boundary stone which marks the line betwixt the parish of Pengareg and my own, I pulled in to a walk and for the next mile petted and patted the horses and laughed with the postboy behind. Then, as we topped a little hill and saw Pwllwen a scant three furlongs away, I raised a wild whoop and started again.

That was a dash! How the pigs in the ditches did grunt and scramble! how the colts in the

fields did kick up and gallop, and how the dust did fly as we bowled along like mad over the bridge. Then I shouted to the folk in the straggling street, and after that everything went crazy.

The postboy yelled behind till his cap flew off, the dogs barked and leaped at the horses as we went, the children screamed, the boys threw up their caps and capered; the women ran to the doors and the men hurrahed like folk demented as we crashed over the cobble-stones and drew short up in a cloud of steam and dust at the door of the Black Lion, where Evan Landlord was waving his apron and shouting like the veriest boy of them all.

Thereafter the uproar subsided into laughter and greetings till it rose into another cheer when I directed that a barrel of ale should be tapped, free to everybody, while the postboy, as became his new elevation, was to have a jorum of punch brewed in his especial honour. I said nothing about the horses; Tom Ostler and I knew each other too well for that, and he would have felt deeply hurt had I ventured to doubt him by any recommendation.

That was indeed a rare hour and I went breasting about as if I had come back head of a whole University instead of a dunce in disgrace. But

what did college or education signify just then to one who was home once more to his own place and people? Was I not Ivor Meyric, son to Griffith Meyric of Dolgoch, with all that that implied in his village of Pwllwen? I would not have changed places with the King himself at that moment.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING WILL BARRY AND THE AFFRAY AT GORPHWYSFA.

All my life I had been accustomed to feel that I was at home so long as I was anywhere within sight of Pwllwen, and as much so in an open field as under the roof of Dolgoch. Therefore it did not occur to me to drive up the avenue to the house in a post-chaise. It did occur to me, however, to inquire about my father; whether he was at home? had he received any letter concerning me? and so forth. In reply Evan Black Lion assured me that my father had been away on a visit of three weeks' or so's duration, to Treffynnon, and was expected back to-day; every minute in fact, and that he was riding and so would come from the other side and not through the village at all: at which last item I felt strangely relieved without troubling to reason why.

A letter had arrived certainly, but I knew it would be waiting at the hall still since nobody

there would venture to pester my father by forwarding it to Treffynnon: letters to him having mostly to do with money owing, or other equally unpleasant things.

This was unwelcome intelligence to me; as I should thus be in contact with my father at the first moment of his disappointment in me. Now that I was at home, my courage seemed suddenly to have failed me and, at the first blush, I seriously meditated flight to the house of one of the hill tenants, till my father's wrath should have blown over — three or four days at the farthest. Shame, however, kept me from that in the end and I turned to make further inquiries. Was Will Barry gone with my father? Oh no! he stayed at home to attend to the steward's work and practise fencing as usual with the sword he was so fond of. This relieved me immensely and when, a moment or two later, I set out for the Hall, my spirits had risen again to a very merry pitch as I parted with my kindly friends at the bridge.

I did not take the avenue road but stuck to the short cut through the woods, as had been my wont since ever I could remember. This short cut was comparatively steep at first, for Dolgoch and its park covered a gentle hill, between whose foot and

the sea ran the road I had come by. From the Park gates to the shingly beach lay the two hundred yards or so of one-sided street which constituted the village of Pwllwen, and looking back at it, as I climbed, I had in addition a glorious view of the coast on either hand and the shining sea beyond, lonely, mysterious and beautiful with the fascination it has ever held for me. The road from the village on turned inland again, up the valley of the little stream skirting the westward side of the Park, for the coast country immediately beyond was wild and impassable save to mountain ponies or men — a veritable paradise though, to me, from my earliest years till now. I did not lag, however, for I was eager to consult with Will Barry. And perhaps I had better pause here to explain who Will Barry was.

To begin with, he was the only child of the housekeeper, but concerning him in that direction you shall hear further on. What was more to the point just then was that he was in some sort both foster-brother and foster-father rolled in one to me. Twelve or thirteen years older than myself, he had, upon the death of my nurse, summarily set the women folk at defiance and taken me in hand himself, being then a wild, untamable sprig

who spent most of his days by cliff or waste and his nights in crooning fierce old ballads to the music of his harp. Considering the blood he came of, however, this was to be expected, and so the tenant folk half loved, half feared him, and held him in no little awe: while his own kin, the Ap Morgans of the village, nodded their heads in grim approval. As the days wore on and I was put to study under the parson, he, as a matter of course, studied too and profited enough for both of us, insomuch that when I was packed off to *college* he was sufficiently learned to keep the old steward's accounts, whenever, as often fell out, that worthy old toper went off for weeks together on a drinking bout.

So well did he acquit himself at such times and so passionate was he for fair and kindly dealings all round, that when at last old David Steward fell dead of an apoplectic stroke, he found himself saddled with the duties of steward and factotum in general, nobody having appointed him thereto and nobody dreaming of anybody else filling the office. All of which would have caused him a huge disgust had it not been that now he considered himself able to, in some degree, requite thus the kindness of his kinsman, my father; and at the same time

indulge his passion for keeping folk happy by being just or erring on the side of mercy. He did not commit those errors on his own responsibility, but he could put a case so earnestly that my father would become warmer than he on that side and so the whole place gained in intensity of affection, while as for cash — why Dolgoch could always draw another bill. Perhaps his chiefest reason, though, for sticking to the stewardship lay in his relation, as head of the Ap Morgans of Pwllwen (whom he ruled through old Morris Las), to my father's house, a reason the weight of which will become amply apparent as this tale proceeds.

Thence, too, sprang his most characteristic habit, alluded to by Evan Black Lion, for day in and day out, through it all, there was one pursuit and one aim which he never deviated from following. In all the manly exercises, running, leaping, wrestling, quarterstaff and singlestick, he was the pride of the coast country, while he was the best shot in a day's ride. But the one thing above all else he practised was the use of the sword, and Huw Trooper, who had served in the wars of the Low Countries almost all his life, owed his position as retainer at Dolgoch entirely to his skill with that

weapon, which he had daily to use in a stiff bout against the steward.

Not that Will Barry would ever do much good fencing in the hurly of a battle, opined old Huw: he was too fierce and impatient by nature for that, but wherever he made a cut something would be shorn away, and wheresoever he planted a thrust daylight would follow, which, after all, would count most in a press any day. With all these accomplishments in addition to his natural love for me, it is small wonder that he was my hero and that I paid grave heed to his admonitions and advice and set myself with great pains to learn when he made a task of teaching me these same manly sciences. If I had acquitted myself of book-learning one-half so well as I did with regard to these other branches, then I had assuredly become a most famous professor in very short time.

The reader will now understand why I was in a hurry to get the ear of Will Barry before my father should return.

The path through the wood was merely a sort of deer or sheep trail, running by bush and boulder, bracken and close timber, till it reached a little open space about half-way home. Here the heather made a purple carpet to tempt the wandering feet,

and there were nooks that invited one to lie limb length in the afternoon sun — a pleasant place to come upon that was and we had always called it "Gorphwysfa."

One of its charms was the suddenness with which one breasted into it from either direction, for it was not distinguishable until you were actually within a stride or two of it. This day, however, in my pride of home-coming I was determined to locate it before reaching it, and so I went quietly and with senses alert. Presently, when I thought I must be near it, my ears caught suddenly the sound of oaths and scufflings and immediately I quickened my pace to a run.

A dozen strides and I was upon the edge of the open space and in full view of a sight that made me pause till I could take it in. Close in front of me lay a villainous-looking fellow stretched at full length, nursing a broken head with both hands and growling out strange seaman's curses, in a mazed sort of way, as the blood dripped through his fingers. But this was not the main thing, for, in the depths of a dense bush at the left edge of the clearing I could both hear and see that a desperate struggle was a-stirring, though from where I paused the whole affair looked most like some

fight of wild beasts. But it was a fight and that was quite enough for me. With one bound I cleared the prostrate form of the ruffian in front and dashed across to the bush. There, all in amazement, I stood at first to see that tangle of legs and arms and hazel withes which seemed as if it never could be extricated and set right again. Then a face showed for an instant and I raised a sharp shout of sudden anger, as, in spite of blood and mud and tangle, I recognised the features of Will Barry.

He was gasping and nearly done for, being upon his back, yet still, with the old stubborn strength I knew so well, was gripping the necks of two of his assailants close to his own, and with the grip of his locked hands and rigid arms was nigh to breaking both, while their arms and bodies thrashed and squirmed in vain attempts to free themselves.

A third had been endeavouring to hold his legs and had found himself as fast as a badger in a trap. I saw all this in a flash and, instantly therewith, flung myself upon the one in his left arm. Setting my knee in the fellow's back I took him by the pigtail, and as soon as Will could let him go I jerked his head back till his throat was

as taut as a harpstring. Then with a sharp back stroke from the edge of my open hand fair in the Adam's apple I stopped his wind, and rising, flung him aside on the broad of his back, well assured that for the next few minutes he would have more than he could well manage in trying to draw breath.

The fellow caught in the leg grip had by this squirmed half loose and I called briefly to Will to let him go. No sooner was he free and standing than I took him with a hip lock and threw him, for he had not got his wind yet. Swift as he fell I was upon him. Slipping my two arms under his from behind I locked my hands on the back of his neck and setting my right knee in the small of his back, tightened the pressure till he burst out in a volley of frightful oaths. But there is no escape from that lock, and, after one sharp effort to loose it, the hard frame beneath me slacked; the smothered curses died away; there was a long breath that hissed through the set teeth; a low groan, and next a faint, sick yell as I gave a final wrench.

At once, for I knew he would fight no more that day, I loosed my hold and let him lie out, limp and nerveless, while I turned to aid Will

with the last. But meanwhile the struggle had gone against him. When he held the two by their necks, the closeness of their position together baulked all their attempts at getting a sure hold with their hands, while the hazel tangle prevented good footing; but when I took off the one the other found room to get a grip and, as Will was so far spent, it went hard with his chances.

A knife which had belonged to the one I first tackled was lying handy in the bushes, and the villain he was locked with bent all his energies to reach it. Even as I rose he seized it, and I heard the panting curse that broke from him as he lifted it. Quick as I moved to throw myself upon his arm the knife was quicker, and I saw the flash as it descended, with the red blood-spurt that followed. Mad with rage at so dastardly a deed, I fell upon the bloody miscreant with such fury that he, having been fain to let go the knife in order to escape the fierce clutch of his victim's hand, and taken utterly by surprise as he staggered, gasping, back, made no attempt to defend himself, but fairly turned and fled. I was not minded, though, that he should escape so, therefore I sprang after him, but, at my second leap,

lighted upon a slippery tree-root and came down with such a bang as dazed me for an instant, so that afterwards I was thankful the discomfited scoundrel was too far gone to turn back and stab me also.

Then I remembered that the other villains should be looked to and prevented from either new mischief or escape. The sight of Will Barry, however, lying pale and bleeding in the bush, drove all other thoughts away and I rushed at once to his side. But the huge sob sticking in my throat burst into an exclamation of delight as I knelt beside him, for he greeted me with a brave attempt at a smile, and though his left hand was pressed to his wound, he took my right hand in his and gave it a fairly strong grasp as he gasped out, "Just in time — Ivor."

Straightway I fell a-dressing and a-bandaging, and so busy and so glad was I to find that the wound, though serious, was not mortal, that when, upon finishing, I rose to fetch a hatful of water from a near spring, I was utterly astonished to find the remainder of the discomfited rogues clean gone and vanished.

Notwithstanding this, however, I would not leave my foster-brother, as he urged, and go up

home for servants to carry him, since I dreaded lest his late assailants might be still lurking near, ready to repeat the attack the instant he was left alone. He seemed himself to think scorn of any such danger and was so comfortable upon the point that at last I consented to run a short distance up the path and try my lungs. My loud and long halloo at first brought no response and I was turning back, bootless of my effort, when I heard a whirl of leaves, the rush of padded eagerness, and next instant old Marchog, my bonny old hound, truest and faithfullest of his breed, was leaping and rolling round me, filling the air with noises of delight and half frantic with joy as we burst back into the clearing and reached Will Barry again. At sight of him the old dog fell into a distracted state, whining first over the bloody bandages and pale face and then breaking out into three or four short barks of delight as he looked up into my face. Here, however, was a messenger, and without loss of time I smeared my hat with blood and gave it to him, telling him to carry that up to the hall. The commission sobered him at once and, with the stout carriage he ever assumed when duty was afoot, he dashed off up the path to obey.

Hardly had I time to turn round twice, as it seemed to me, ere old Marchog's signal came floating through the trees in a long howl of impatience, telling that the men had leashed him to guide them back. Presently after I caught the sound of men dashing along the narrow path with crash of brushwood and clatter of weapons, and in upon us broke the party, Evan Woodcutter leading with uplifted axe, and followed by half a dozen from the stables and kitchen, old Huw Trooper growling and limping along in rear, swearing the while at his inability to keep up. The clamour of their welcome to me broke off short as I showed them Will's condition and bade them haste to cut and weave a litter for the bearing of him. At the same time I started Huw Trooper and three others on the trail of the four who had attacked us, bidding them arrest the fugitives and lead them to the Hall to await my father's coming.

Then, the litter being shortly ready, we lifted the wounded man upon it and slowly took the path for Dolgoch.

CHAPTER III.

TELLING OF THE APPEARANCE OF "MISTER MORGAN."

When we came to the hall door we heard a great din of swearing and stamping and hammering of whip stock inside, for my father was just ridden to the door and had found no man about the place either to attend his horse or himself. The housekeeper was somewhere above stairs and the maids were vainly attempting to break in upon his wrath, in order to explain, when the sight of us and our burden coming to the open door caught their eyes and they set up a chorus of little shrieks, thereby causing my father to turn and see us also.

"Hullo! What is the matter? What brawl is this, Ivor?" He appeared not to remember that I was supposed to be away at school in England.

"Will Barry has been stabbed!" I made answer.

"Stabbed! who by? Here, Dick Groom! take my horse and ride for David Doctor! Fly! Who did you say stabbed him?" This last to me again.

"There were four of them; all strangers to me, sir."

"Strangers here at Dolgoch! but surely some of you can recognise them. Have their bodies taken down to the Black Lion at once," he commanded.

"If they are caught they are to come up here, sir. That was my order," replied I.

"Caught, sir! caught! What! Will Barry stabbed and nobody dead. What do you mean, sir? Explain!"

I took mighty short order in the explaining, as you may well believe, and by the snorts of impatience with which my father punctuated the narrative, I was quite prepared for the huge disgust at the whole affair which he condensed into a single word when I had finished. We will merely call that word, well, — anything you like, and go on.

Here, however, Will interposed himself and with great effort tried to assure my father that it was all a surprise and that I had handled three men to my own share. This in turn roused me and I was beginning to combat it as stoutly as a son may in his father's presence, when we heard a little cry from the stairs, and down flew Will's mother.

The distress of that next minute for us all I can hardly picture, but from my father's alternate

efforts first to comfort his cousin and then to relieve his feelings upon his manifest failure in that task, by roundly abusing the rest of us — I should judge that his feelings were as acutely wretched as any person's there. Another two minutes of this and I believe he would have stalked off with a fowling piece to hunt up old David and hasten him with a load of small shot, when there came the welcome sound of hoofs pounding up the avenue and the doctor was in a flash dismounting, hatless and with his wig held firmly on by his left hand.

His arrival quieted the wailings and there fell a very anxious moment while he made a swift examination of his patient. At first he looked very grave, but as he continued his face lightened, and there were long sighs of relief to welcome his words when at last he said: "Oh, that's better! Dear King! It's not nearly so bad, after all, as I was first thinking."

Even the mother quieted at that and my father rapped out a strong expression of delight when finally the doctor ended by telling us that "it had missed the — " something with a dangerous sounding name, though I do not know what it was or what it meant. It was quite enough for us all to gather that there was no immediate danger, and

that a month's nursing would likely set the patient up as sound and strong as ever. Meanwhile he was to be carried up to bed and was not to be worried or allowed to talk. Which instructions became law at once; for all the household loved Will Barry.

This new aspect of affairs so pleased my father that he bade me accompany him to the library, as the room wherein he spent most of his time was called, though its few books were mostly treatises upon war and sports, and could well have been bestowed upon one window ledge. Here he made me go over the whole story again, making much of any point which his love for me could construe to my credit, and thereby causing me to be much ashamed of my conduct at school and very sorely grieved at the prospect of having shortly to confess my misdeeds in that direction. For I judged it wiser to be beforehand of the letter and to tell him the plain truth that I was no scholar and never would be, and that I would far fainer be an honourable country gentleman, as my father and his father had been before me, than a pettifogging cozener of unfortunate folk; even though that should lead to the woolsack and a peerage.

And I think my father in his heart liked me the

better for my speech, for instead of breaking out into sharp censure at my failure, he only heaved a deep sigh, saying: "It was for your own good, Ivor! But I will explain some other day."

Then I was directed to stand up that he might judge of my growth since my last holiday and admire what he called "the pretty figure of a man I was making." The disordered state of my dress next moved him to decide that, as I had now left school, I must dress as became my position in his house.

"And wear a sword, too," he went on with sudden heat; "these wind-juggling fools in London may say what they like about disarming the disaffected in Wales; but my people shall no longer go at the mercy of every stark thief who chooses to attack them. We've been two years carrying cudgels as if we were batmen to my lords the King's ministers; but from this day on we will carry weapons as becomes free men, and loyal, too, if they will only let us alone with their appointments and their officers."

As you may guess, I was mightily pleased to hear such high words, for where there is heat and discontent there is chance of dispute and hard knocks; and what can so please a young man as

that? But I kept my glee under and merely answered, soberly and dutifully, that he was quite right, I was sure, and I should be glad indeed when our people could wear their weapons as the wont had been, for I believed that the interdict had occasioned great murmuring. To have me so echo his own ideas pleased my father immensely and accordingly the tailor was sent for upon the instant, while the meantime 'twixt that and his arrival was to be spent in choosing a suitable dress sword wherewith to grace my new worship.

And thus it fell out that I never had to listen to a single reproach anent the cause of my leaving school.

As soon as the interview with Shahm Tailor was over my father announced his intention of going down to the village to see about the capturing of the villains who had attacked Will Barry. I was to accompany him and Walter Tygwn was to attend us with a fowling piece. We took the footpath and my father was greatly interested in the signs of struggle still evident when we reached Gorphwysfa.

"What has the dog found?" said he, as old Marchog, who had followed, suddenly quested forward and then stopped to sniff.

"A knife," answered I, as I stooped to pick up the find.

"That is a curious bit of work," commented my father, as he took it and began to examine it closely. "Seems to me to be a Spanish make, such as I have seen when travelling in Spain, though there they told me that the like of it were chiefly made for the rich settlers of Spanish America, who alone could afford to pay for them. Do you see the rich damascening and gold inlay of the blade? and especially do you mark the beautiful workmanship and mounting of the haft?" queried my father, holding it so that I might con the rare value and handsomeness of the dagger.

"These men were seafaring men: I could plainly swear to that," said I, by way of answer.

"Aye! that we may be sure of," went on my father; "but not common seamen. Your ordinary mariner carries an ordinary knife in his belt. He does not trim a loose lashing with a dagger that is worth five and twenty pounds if it is worth a penny."

"Perhaps they are buccaneers shipwrecked on this coast and tramping toward Bristol to take ship again. Might it not be that they, being destitute and not choosing to be had up to give an

account of themselves before a magistrate, should lie here in the woods intending to rob Dolgoch in the night; and that, Will Barry finding them, they set upon him to murder him and so prevent discovery?"

"Well now, Ivor, that Doctor Deeply must have been a rare fool to say you were a slow wit, for that is as clever and likely an explanation as could possibly be, and I don't doubt but what these rogues will confess the same at once when I have them before me. We'll hurry down and see about them at once; I'll teach them to try their rascalities here, I warrant you."

But though we made all speed to the Black Lion, we found on our arrival that we might have spared our wind, for Huw Trooper was standing under the great oak in front and swearing like — like a trooper, at his ill success.

It appeared that while he and his men were searching the wood, four men had passed boldly over the bridge, and, skirting the village, had betaken themselves to the beach and there, turning left, had continued to the foot of the cliffs, where a very long and roomy boat had taken them on board, putting out to sea immediately afterwards.

As to who the four were, Charles Penrhiw had

a word to say. Penrhiw lay a mile or so beyond where the boat had anchored but in a position that enabled Charles to see it well. He saw that it was a stranger and, as such was an unusual sight in Pwllwen, had taken good notice of it. Now, only an hour or two before, he had been working over on the far edge of the farm and had watched four men go lurching past as though they did not wish to be seen. Therefore, since it is as well to let sleeping dogs lie, and further, since he had seen one of them before, he had kept hidden till they were well gone, afterwards striding home in order to get a comfortable place to think the matter over. Likely enough it was the being already roused by one occurrence which led to his taking such interest in the other, namely, the hauling inshore of the outland boat; the two finally deciding him to come down to the Black Lion and lay the matter before the village chiefs. In following out this laudable decision he had once more come across the four men just as they were nearing the beach upon their escape, and the only other thing he had to say about the matter was that the leader of the four was Mr. Morgan.

"'Mister' Morgan," ejaculated my father, catching at the English title intruded into the Welsh-

man's tale. "And who the devil is 'Mister' Morgan that you should be knowing and mistering him, Penrhiw?"

"I think Evan Black Lion can tell you best about that, sir," replied the person addressed.

"And you know this Mister Morgan then, Evan?" quoth my father, impatiently, to the landlord. "Who is this stranger that makes himself at home here when I'm away and gets hand and glove with my own people? Some Government spy, I'll warrant; come to ruin me behind my back, and I to know nothing about it till the warrant is signed and boot and spur put to it to lay me fast for trial. A fine people you are," my father snorted indignantly.

There rose a chorus of dissent at this, and Will's henchman, Morris Las, the grimmest old seadog in the place, stood boldly forth. "Do you think, Dolgoch, that if he had shown the marks of a spy we wouldn't have had him over Trwynhir at short length? or trailed him out astern of the lugger till he would sink too deep to ever make any report in London? Do you think I would not have done it myself alone if need be?"

This was so long and hot a speech for Morris

that I could see it impressed my father very much, and he hastened to soothe the old fellow.

"I didn't suppose that you would knowingly harbour a spy. What I complain of is that a stranger was here and no word sent to me."

"But, sir, if you will hear me, there is nothing wrong in what we know of this man," interposed the landlord. "It is this way, sir — won't you sit down, though, and taste something from the cellar while I explain. Nanno! a bottle of the wine you know, quick! That's it, sir, that's the stuff you always liked, sir — ah yes! and about this man: Well, he came strolling down the street and up to the door as cool as you please the morning after you left, and when I sent Nanno to take his pleasure he smiled and begged to see the landlord — speaking English and Nanno not understanding, of course. Well, sir, I know a little of English and I asked what he would be pleased to require, and he said, very short and polite, that he would like to take rooms at the Black Lion for a week or so if I had such at disposal. He had no luggage with him, he said, making a very condescending bow of the matter, because he had not intended to stay at Pwllwen. He had been coasting along in a lugger and, as they lay be-

calmed that morning in a cove a little to the eastward, he had just stepped ashore for a short stroll. Thereupon the rascally skipper had taken advantage of a breeze that shortly ruffled along to put out to sea and leave him — 'For the sake of stealing my baggage,' as the stranded gentleman put it. Luckily his purse was in his pocket and so he had walked on here where, if I could accommodate him, he would stay till he could put the law in motion, for the punishment of the scoundrelly master of the lugger and the recovery of his effects.

"Now, sir, what could I do but put the gentleman up in the best room and make him as comfortable as possible; for he ate and drank of the best of everything, keeping mostly to himself it's true, which I reckoned showed his breeding. But sometimes he would have me sit down and tell him the tales of the country-side, and when I spoke of Ynys Galon and the old Ap Morgans he became very interested and would listen with his eyes half shut. I think that was because when I first told some of their wild ways and customs his eyes flashed out so that I stopped and stared, upon which he started and smiled and apologised, saying that the story had reminded him of something that belonged to his boyhood.

"Then he used to take a boat and have Pierce Aros or Mat Anthony to handle it and carry him across to the island, and there he would wander all over it, questioning the men and noting everything in a way that began to look strange. But he used always to laugh when they told about the pirates' treasure; affecting to believe never a word of it.

"After a day or two old Morris Las got uneasy and told Pierce and Mat that they were to go with Dick Shon in the lugger when she put out that night and he would look after Mister Morgan himself in the morning.

"I reckon Mister Morgan got suspicious in his turn and they two stood off and on to one another all day, yawing and going about to get the weather of each other and both letting out as much as so many oysters.

"Next day too, old Morris was ready to go through it all over again, but Mister Morgan he says no; he thinks he's seen as much of the island as he cares to and he's busy this morning. So old Las he goes off to smoke and send word to Will Barry and presently the stranger says he'll take a stroll in the woods and after a few minutes' chat with me he goes off by himself over the bridge.

"A couple of hours after he strides down here as black as midnight and with the front of his fine shirt all torn away. When I asked him if any harm had befallen him he smiled as amiably as the bars in a jail window and says that he had been attacked by footpads, and he wants a horse to ride over to lay the case before the magistrate at Pengareg—yourself not being at home, sir. Then he flung down gold enough to settle his bill twice over. 'That's for your security till I return,' said he, and straight called for his sword (a rare blade it was) and buckled it on. You see I had told him when he first came how no one was allowed to wear arms in Pwllwen, and when he asked who was to prevent him I explained that all the men were savage about it, and if they couldn't wear them themselves would take care that nobody else should.

"Therefore he smiled as he buckled it on once more and, taking off a bottle of wine of Bordeaux as if it had been so much ale, mounted the horse Tom Ostler led round and pricked away for Pengareg.

"The horse came back that night, but not under Mister Morgan; which was a great disappointment, for Will Barry had been in the best room

ever since noon waiting for him to come back and very mysterious over it all; smiling right through me when I tried to find out what it was he so wanted to see the stranger for.

"That was four days ago, and that's all we know about Mister Morgan, sir, with what Penrhiw has told you, though I should let you know besides that we think the same lugger put him and his three rascals ashore somewhere well to the East, and then after lying hove to for a couple of hours to give them time, put along this way again to pick them up when their job was over."

CHAPTER IV.

MY FOSTER-BROTHER EXPLAINS.

"And the doctor says Will Barry must not be worried and must not talk. Myn Diaoul! but that doctor ought to be put in the stocks," quoth my father, with a comical expression on his face, as Evan Black Lion finished his story. "What do you think, Ivor?"

"I think that we shall know more about it when Will Barry gets better and I don't think we shall know much before. It appears to be something between him and this stranger, and I fancy the stranger is a buccaneer who in some way got wind of the story about the treasure on Ynys Galon and that Will Barry got track of him and his plans, wnatever they were — and more than that I should not like to say," ended I, oracularly.

"Well, I don't think he was a political spy at any rate," quoth my father, thoughtfully, "I rather incline — in fact," he broke off, "I don't know just what to believe."

"Don't you think, sir," interposed old Morris Las, "that Mister Morgan was just some infernal preventive officer trying to find out something about our bit of trading? Where the hiding places are and how often we make our little runs and that sort of thing, sir?"

Now the reader is here to understand that the people of Pwllwen, honest men, got a hardy living at what was spoken of as the Free Trade, which meant then, as now, plain smuggling, but so keen and daring were they; so full of wiles and shifts; and withal so dangerous and desperate when suddenly come upon, that the revenue officers had been fain to leave them alone as far as possible and to look the other way whenever there was no other fashion of escaping a collision. Therefore, old Morris' suggestion was plausible.

I could see my father was inclined to appear to give it consideration and so I forbore to comment upon it one way or another.

Presently, seeming to dismiss the whole matter with a shake of the head, my father rose. Before leaving, however, he ordered another barrel of ale to be broached in honour of my return, saying that, as Will Barry had been so grievously wounded we could not have the proper festivities, which, how-

ever, would take place as soon as Will should be convalescent. One loud cheer greeted this announcement and another our departure as we strode sedately over the cobble stones, I copying to my best ability the air and carriage of the young gallants I had so often seen in England and dandling the gold-headed Malacca cane — which had accompanied my father's gift of a sword — as nearly as possible with the finikin elegance that distinguished them.

And even the twinkle in the corner of my father's eye, as he noticed my strut, did not materially damp my self-importance, for I knew that it minded him of the days of his own youth when he ruffled it along Pall Mall with the swipperest young blades of them all.

We left Walt. Tygwn to keep Huw Trooper and his men company, for it would have been cruel to tear them from the pleasures of the Black Lion while Dolgoch must be so quiet, and as soon as we reached the Hall again my father gave permission to all the rest of the men about the house, saving Payne Butler, to go down and join them, with word to Evan Landlord to add another barrel, which, in his opinion, would be just sufficient to make them merry but not more.

In the hall we found the parson sitting over the fire, having a crack with the doctor, whom my father had desired to take up quarters at Dolgoch till his patient should be well again. Now the doctor, though he ran away from Cardiff to begin life as apprentice to a worthy barber-chirurgeon in Bath, — as the practice then was in the healing art, — had yet contrived, by the exercise of a most admirable diligence, to come at a sound knowledge of reading, writing and ciphering. This knowledge he continued to follow up in two directions, so that, by the time he had arrived at the middle age, he was in possession, on the one hand, of a fund of discursive information that enabled him to hold his own, even in the withdrawing rooms of that fashionable town, while on the other, he had progressed through an apothecary's shop to a partnership with a bustling doctor and a consequent skill in his profession which was the wonder of his early master. Which worthy man was very proud, however, to hear that Doctor David had still a strong leaning to the practice of phlebotomy. To what heights the worthy doctor might have attained there is no saying, but it chanced that he was called in to attend the wife of a retired ship-chandler, which good man fell into a

jealousy of the eyes his rogue wife did make at the doctor, so much that he flouted back to Bristol with all his establishment, previously arranging with certain three bullies to waylay the doctor and beat him soundly. This scurvy trick was played to a nicety, of which the town learning, the shallow pates and furbelows did so embroider the tale as to set the street a-giggle whenever the doctor passed along, and finally did clean laugh him out of the place, since he could never pin a quarrel upon any one of them, though he, being a Welshman, did not slack in trying for the space of three whole days. And in the end he stood up in the fashionable street and swore at the whole city, thereafter incontinently mounting his dun nag and heading him for the blue hills again, vowing as he went that women were an invention of the Father of Evil for the undoing of man. Possibly this was the reason he settled at Pwllwen; the parson of it being likewise a bachelor with no great objections to the good doctor's standing or prejudices. For the rest, both he and the parson were very good company, and, saving for the latter's share in the matter of my education, stout allies and staunch friends of mine, — like everybody else in my native place.

As soon as we entered my father fell upon the subject in his mind. "Doctor, Will Barry must talk. There is a mysterious matter afoot that, belike, he knows most of. At any rate we can only guess and wonder, for all the world like striplings at a riddle, until you let him talk and tell us the answer. How soon will that be?"

"Before long, sir. Two days, I hope. Perhaps less. I've just come down from tucking him up, and he shows no signs of fever — "

"Fever! Diaoul! Doctor! considering the remedy you always use for fever, he ought never to know it again so long as he lives."

This allusion to his fondness for the phlebotomic practice — meaning thereby a readiness to whip out the lancet and let blood upon every occasion — turned the laugh against the doctor, which, he joining in it, thawed his professional asperity into an admittance that perhaps to-morrow night would do for a set interrogation of my foster-brother.[1]

By this time our stomachs did remind us that it was time to dine, proceeding to which, we there-

[1] I am well aware that the use of the term "foster-brother" is slightly incorrect here, but I have ventured to use it as best expressing my relation to Will Barry in spite of the difference in our ages.

after spent a very cheery evening, I airing my traveller's knowledge in a way that contributed much to the general geniality.

Next morning the doctor's report was more favourable than had been expected, and by evening he announced that the interview might quite proceed; due regard for the wounded man's condition being had throughout.

We found my foster-brother in a very cheerful mood — as indeed I had all along found him in the half score surreptitious visits I had already paid him since morning — and able to enter into my father's perplexity fully. Nevertheless, his words were very few and he begged us to believe that Mister Morgan was a pirate or buccaneer only, and neither Government spy nor secretly daring revenue officer. The story, however, was somewhat too long just now and he would, with my father's permission, defer it till to-morrow, there being no present danger, provided that the men in the house did not sleep too soundly.

With this explanation, which told us very little, yet hinted at a great deal, my father was graciously content, having a regard for Will which moved him no little. I, however, with the impatience of youth, was mightily eager for to-morrow,

and when it came hailed with a sigh of relief the stroke of the clock which announced that the second interview was at hand.

This time the patient received us propped up by pillows and looking quite strong. He hardly waited the exchange of greetings before he plunged into his story, beginning, however, at the nearest end.

"It fell out this way, sir. I was going down to Pwllwen by the short path through the woods, when, nearing the Gorphwysfa, I thought I heard some one moving ahead of me. I went cautiously at that, for I remembered something which befell in that place four days before when I had a passage with a certain stranger there, Mister Morgan to wit. Sure enough as I came to a thinning in the bushes I spied the stranger standing there and holding forth in English to three of the most villainous looking rogues that ever ripened on a gallows. I could not hear what was said, but presently I saw them separate and cast about as if searching for something in the heather. I fancied I knew what they were looking for and I laughed to myself, for a reason you shall presently understand. But shortly one came so close to where I stood as to catch a sight of me, whereupon I, not liking to run from such gentry, leaped

upon him and wrenched his cudgel from him so smartly that he fell sprawling yards away.

"His first shout naturally roused the others, and I, perceiving the need for bestirring myself if I meant to come off well against such stout rogues, fell upon the nearest and, parrying the blow of his staff, laid him out with a broken head. The other two came on so furiously that I was forced to give ground somewhat until I happened to fetch one a rap across the knuckles that made him drop his knife and stop to swear. With that I began to fancy myself hugely, when of a sudden the first fellow stole up unawares and caught my cudgel from behind. Instantly the fourth, Mister Morgan himself, closed in with the other upon me, whereat I, dropping the cudgel, took hold of them both in the only way open to me.

"I might have done well even then, but the sore-knuckled one took me by the legs and we all four went down into the hazels behind, Mister Morgan's knife being whipped out of his grip by a withe that caught it. That sort of thing could not have lasted long, and just as I had begun to think I was in for something rough, up sprang Ivor: and I have no doubt you know the rest."

"Yes! but that explains nothing," said my father.

"No, sir," replied Will, "but I am coming to that now.

"You remember that I mentioned a passage having before occurred at Gorphwysfa between the stranger and myself? Well, that meeting was the seed of the whole matter. That time I was coming home from Coed Hen and in the open ran against Mister Morgan. Old Marchog was with me and he flew at the stranger; the first time he ever did such a thing in his life. He was marking for the throat, but, as the man stepped back, seized only the neck-cloth and shirt collar, which he tore away as clean as a pikeshaft. The fellow swore a fearful great oath and, whipping out a little pistol, fired at the hound, but missed. I was so hot at that, to think so good a hound should be killed for so small a mistake, that I made no more ado, but laid about him with the quarterstaff in my hand and so handsomely that first I set him a-skipping lustily and next a-lying stiff, for I fetched the sixth or seventh rap so soundly across his sconce as laid him senseless.

"And maybe, sir, you think the stab at the second meeting was in exchange for the knock at the first. But it was not, as you shall see.

"When I left him lying and strode away home — knowing that he would soon come to, and thinking that it would hardly do to have him up before a magistrate after such a handling (more by reason too that you were away and I would not have it said that we were obliged to go to Pengareg to get justice on a rogue) — I took no notice of the old dog beyond telling him to keep to heel. But when I entered the hall below, he came round in front of me, and, just as if he had been a retriever fetching a moorcock or a wild duck, dropped the mouthful of cloth and collar he still carried, and I heard something solid strike the stones at my feet. I stooped at once and picked it up, and here, sir, is what I found in my hand." So saying, Will thrust his arm under the pillow and drew forth — a red stone almost as large as a walnut, set in rough gold and shining with dazzling brilliance.

"And what is that?" queried the doctor, adjusting his horn spectacles upon his nose, while my father stepped back with a cry of astonishment and I felt my mouth and throat grow dry as a furnace.

"That," answered Will, quietly, with an eager, questioning look at my father, "that is the Jewel of Ynys Galon."

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE JEWEL OF YNYS GALON.

HERE I must break back in order to relate the foundation of the significance of the Jewel.

In the old days Dolgoch held a much more extensive domain than in my boyhood, and seven generations before me, my ancestor, then lord of it, had two sons. The younger of these, called, on account of his swarthy appearance, Morgan Ddu, was a wild and reckless lad, stark in all his ways no matter what befell. The elder son was equally strong in disposition while perhaps more subtle of temper, and yet they loved each other more dearly than was the wont of brothers in those days. Therefore when, in a sudden affray, Morgan slew the King's Sheriff and was outlawed for it, the elder brother sheltered him and they two made a plan and swore a compact between them. Morgan was to take and settle upon the island of Ynys Belre, becoming sea rover, while the elder was to countenance him as far as

he dared; to stand between him and the law as far as his power would go, and, openly or secretly, as might be best, always and ever to succour him to the last acre and the last gasp if need be.

In those days the land swarmed with Redhands, as the men outlawed for blood were always called in Wales, and so, ere he went, Morgan Ddu gathered all the Redhands from Mynyddhir to Rhyd-y-Voel and with them rode against the dead Sheriff's castle, burning it in the grey of the morning and thereafter retiring swiftly to Llongborth, whence he took ship and sailed for his island, which he renamed Ynys Galon from its shape.

It lies some eight miles southwestward of Pwllwen and four out from the mainland, whose cliffs are inaccessible for leagues on either hand of Dolgoch, saving only at Pwllwen. There accordingly he lived as a sea rover all his days, harrying foreign coasts and shipping and bringing home treasure and vast spoil, with women of the fairest to be wives to himself and his men; three or four to each; so that the island grew full of a lusty race and no enemy durst meddle with it or seek its one and only landing place.

And there at last he died, old and grey-headed, but fierce to the last; for he got his death in a fray

THE REIVING OF THE JEWEL

with the grandson of the former Sheriff, whose family he had never ceased to harry from the day of his outlawry. But before that, in one of his foreign burnings and sackings he had captured two things, one a girl of rare beauty and hardness of heart and the other a jewel set in gold, the finest he had ever seen.

And that was the Jewel of Ynys Galon.

The girl was a slave in the palace of the Sultan of Angiers, and the jewel was the front piece of that Sultan's turban; so boldly did Morgan Ddu push his fortunes and so fortunate was he.

Now when he lay a-dying he called all his people round him and bade his sons step forth, one and twenty of them, rank reivers all, come of his loins by his many wives. Then from his neck he took the Jewel and, holding it in his hand, gave them his dying charge, well knowing it would be a law of steel to bind them.

"When I am dead," said he, "take this Jewel and lay it upon Belre's hearth in Nuada's house" (that is to say, upon the hugh cromlech in the ring of unhewn stones standing on the southwest point of the island). "Send instant word to Dolgoch, and the lord of that house will answer by coming back at once with the messenger, for so my brother

and I agreed long ago and this present lord will keep the oath. After he is come, upon the next sunset, all the men on the island shall gather round about Nuada's house, but only you who are my sons shall enter. Then Dolgoch shall stand by the hearth of Belre, with his back to the sunset, and taking the Jewel in his hand shall proclaim that the lord of Ynys Galon is dead and shall ask which of you would be lord of the island in his room. Thereupon that one of you who does conceive himself ablest to follow in my steps, shall claim the lordship, and Dolgoch in answer shall cry the name of the one claiming and bid all men assemble there at sunrise next morning to fulfil the conditions.

"All that night you shall entertain Dolgoch, for he is your protector according to the compact made first between his father's father and myself, and you shall give him a gift and speak him fair and softly that he may never be tempted to fail you at need. Then with the dawn you shall all assemble round Nuada's house again, and as before only ye of my own blood shall enter. Thereafter Dolgoch, lifting the Jewel from the stone where it has lain, shall ask if the same one still claims the lordship and for answer the claimer, stripped naked

(that all may see him to be without personal blemish, since no malformed man may hold rule over his brothers) and with a naked sword in his hand, shall mount the hearth of Belre, and thence challenge all the rest of my blood to yield his right.

"If any one take up the challenge, then he, naked likewise and with a naked sword, shall mount beside the challenger and they two shall fight it out till one yield or is slain. The victor then shall challenge again and so till one shall stand there whom none dare dispute. That one then, facing the sun, shall place his right foot in the cup hole on the stone and Dolgoch shall hang the Jewel about his neck and proclaim him Lord of Ynys Galon and Chief of the sons of Morgan. And all the men without the circle shall take him for Captain.

"But if it befall in the course of time that there shall be no man descended in the male line from me, then the right shall go to such as count by the distaff and the descendants by the female line shall act even as you act now."

At the end of this speech Morgan Ddu fell back dead, and from that day, so long as the Ap Morgans held Ynys Galon, his words were the law of the succession, and the Jewel was its token.

All this, as I say, befell generations before I

was born and, I had ofttimes feared, was passed away with the last of the pirates, but now I was shortly to find that its effects were still terrible and potent for harm.

Yet this was not all the present significance of that fatal Jewel flashing in Will Barry's outstretched hand when he answered the doctor's query. To understand all that its appearance in his grasp implied, it is necessary to recount the story which I had so often heard from the lips of his mother, whom I also regarded as my foster-mother. I give it here.

She was born on the island and was daughter to Rhys Harries, the last lord of it. He had three sons and one daughter beside her, and therefore he made no objection when the then parson of Pwllwen wished to take her to foster, having no children of his own. You are to understand that, there being no church on the island, the custom was to bring the babies to be baptised at Pwllwen and there, if it were a girl, sometimes one of the tenants would take it to foster: the Ap Morgans not, however, allowing such a thing in the case of a boy. But in the past the wild blood had so prevailed in the fostered children that they had ever, after marriage, persuaded their husbands to

build and settle in a cottage by the Pwllwen, and so the village of that name had grown up where before was nothing but the pool and the shingle of the beach. And very soon the villagers claimed that no tenant should foster any island child but only themselves, and so Pwllwen men came to be more than three parts Morgan in blood and wholly so in feeling. And thus it was that old Rhys had not objected when the parson wished to keep his daughter.

When she came to womanhood she married a cousin of my father's, a Merchant Adventurer, trading to the lands that lie beyond the Line: Cathay and the countries of the Great Mogul. Being of a bold nature he commanded his own ship, leaving his wife at Pwllwen in his absence. By this time, however, battle and wreck had sorely thinned the Ap Morgans and Ynys Galon was peopled more by women and children than men. The chief disaster had come two years before, when their great ship — which in grim jest they had named "Cigfach Nuada" or as though they said "Nuada's Fleshhook" — carrying a hundred and fifty men, the flower of them all, laid aboard the huge treasure galleon from Lima and, capturing it after a bloody hurly, found themselves surrounded by three great Spanish war-ships which

had been sent to escort the treasure. But the Ap Morgans were drunk with blood and gold, and so instead of sheering off and making a running fight wherein seamanship might have aided the fewness of their numbers, they stuck to the captured galleon, putting Evan, youngest son to Rhys, aboard her with a boat's crew to make sail and escape while "Nuada's Fleshhook" stayed to hammer the Dons.

Then there befell a fight that makes my blood tingle whenever I think of it. But it would take too long to describe it here; suffice it therefore that, having forced one of the great war-ships to strike its flag — as it lay, a sheer hulk upon the waters, its hamper shot away and its scuppers running blood — the sea-wolves laid aboard the second and, being closed in upon by the third, they fought till there remained not a dozen of them. Then, defiant to the last, they blew up their own ship; thereby destroying the other two, so that all sank together and Evan, upon the treasure galleon, was left to bear home to his father the dearest boughten wealth that ever the sons of Morgan won.

But Ynys Galon at first appeared fated never even to see the price of its stark children. For

THE LAST OF 'NUADA'S FLESHHOOK

on a wild storm-driven morning a spar drifted close to the Landing with one half-drowned wretch clinging to it, who yet had strength remaining to raise the gathering cry of the Ap Morgans. Him they rescued therefore, and from him learnt that he was the sole survivor of all the men who sailed in "Nuada's Fleshhook." It would seem that the treasure galleon, with Evan at the helm, weathered safely all the dangers of the far ocean to be cast at last into that roaring, foaming death trap known as the "Jaws" at the southwest point of the island. It went down with every soul save this one, who owed his escape to having fallen overboard a little while before, with the spar he was cutting away, the storm having wrecked masts and rigging both and swept the decks.

That blow seemed to stupefy the remnant of the islanders.

Only about half a hundred men were left now, if indeed they could be reckoned such who were for the more part greybeards and boys. But—and this was only learned afterwards and dimly, so that until I did establish the truth of it beyond dispute, men laughed at it in public and only believed it in secret—a strange thing indeed was found to have happened. The storm that wrecked the

galleon had indeed drowned her crew, but the hulk itself it had flung bodily in at the mouth of a cave, close to where the rescued man had seen it last.

When this was known to the islanders old Rhys assembled them, all who were of an age to understand, and made them swear on the Jewel in Nuada's house that the knowledge of this last good fortune should be added to the other secrets of the island, and that until he gave the order no person should leave Ynys Galon, even to visit Pwllwen. No stranger ever had been allowed to land on their shores excepting Dolgoch, and therefore this new order completed their isolation. The reason for such secrecy was that they were too few remaining to defend themselves from the expeditions which would inevitably be fitted out for the seizing of the treasure, did word of its existence ever reach the outside world.

The gold and the silver were then stored in the cave, into the mouth of which the hull of the galleon had been cast, only the old men taking part in the work and none of the rest allowed to come within sight. After which old Rhys seemed to sit down to wait till the boys should grow up and the islanders once more be strong enough to enjoy the hidden hoard.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE LOSS OF THE JEWEL AND WHAT BEFELL THEREAFTER.

It was upon a day in the following winter that the starkest stroke of evil fate which ever fell upon any race was first portended to the doomed islanders; though in itself the thing might have seemed to be merely a matter to be settled off-hand by a stroke of the sword.

Once again a ship was wrecked upon the island cliffs, and once again, also, a single survivor was carried on a piece of wreckage close to the Harbour Neck. Now, excepting in the case of one of themselves, the Ap Morgans never allowed survivors from any wreck to land, holding the belief, general then upon all the coasts of Britain, that to do so would bring untold disaster upon the community. But old Rhys appeared to have taken a notion into his head, connected, it may be, with that weary morning, nine days after the galleon's wrecking, when, gently upon the breast

of the incoming tide, up through the tortuous neck and along the placid harbour, lip-lapping home to his father's very threshold, floated the drowned body of Evan, youngest and best loved of his sons. He took a notion, as I say, to save this one man and, when the rest flatly refused to help, pulled out alone and brought the drifting castaway to the harbour stairs.

I have previously mentioned the slave girl whom Morgan Ddu carried off from the Sultan's seraglio when he captured the Jewel. He had afterwards been wont to say in grim heat that she was a witch, born of the powers of Darkness, and that she would live to see the end of his name and race and the desolation of the island. These words were remembered with awe as generations came and went and still she lived on. She became reputed for a witch, and the wild crew, who feared no living thing else, held her in awe and dread, for she still lived on, though she had been old when men now grey were born. As each chief was elected or accepted he moved from whatever house he lived in to Ty Mawr, the "Great House" of Morgan Ddu, but ever as he stepped over the threshold he saw in the chimney-nook the crouching figure of the old witch, even as the chief

before him had seen it and as he knew the chief to follow him would likewise see it. And from holding her as a witch, they had come to force upon her duties in keeping. Each time their ships sailed away for plunder she repeated spells and incantations to insure them luck, and every Hallowe'en she prophesied who should die before the next.

When "Nuada's Fleshhook" had been so named for its last and fatal voyage, she had taken despite to Griffith, eldest son of Rhys, who commanded and had christened it, and so she had banned instead of blessing the voyage, as the islanders remembered afterwards. Therefore her power was greater than ever now.

So when Rhys Harries lifted the stranger to assist him up the steps, she stood at the stair head and cursed him, bidding him cast back its prey to the sea and not meddle with its will, lest he should bring harm upon Ynys Galon and its people.

But Rhys was sore yet for his three sons whom he deemed she had destroyed by banning them, and he whipped out a pistol, swearing that he would send its silver bullet through her if she did not stand aside. All the folk were aghast at this and stood back in awe as he helped the stranger

up, following the old witch into the house. There he commanded Megan his daughter, sister to Will Barry's mother, to nurse the stranger: as he remembered afterwards when the sorrow came.

As the days went on a love sprang up betwixt the stranger and Megan, but old Rhys seemed to care nothing for that since the man had boldly confessed to being the famous Pirate Ulloth, from the Spanish Main. Moreover, because the islanders were so dead set against the one he had rescued, he grew more stubborn and strong in his friendship for him and more deaf to all remonstrance.

Then men began to accuse him of having betrayed the secret of the treasure to the stranger, but Rhys denied this on the Jewel. Nevertheless it appeared certain that the stranger knew of it: perhaps Megan told him: and at last the islanders decided that next day he should be slain. But Megan heard of it, and in the night she stole the Jewel from her father's neck as he slept, and with her lover took boat and fled from the island.

Next day there was a great uproar when all was discovered, and the men gathered angrily and talked of visiting it upon Rhys. But he faced them in his bitter shame and defied them, sticking a pistol

MEGAN STEALS THE JEWEL FROM THE KING'S NECK

to the witch's head and swearing he would shoot her if she did not keep all harm from him. The desperate threat saved him ; for she bade them fall back, telling them that they might not kill Rhys since they could have no other chief to rule over them till the Jewel should come back. Then from sullen she grew to a glow, making them swear faith to Rhys again, forcing them to repeat the oath after her, word for word.

Thereafter followed a wondrous thing, for she bade them carry her to the cliffs above the Jaws, and there, standing on the very edge, with her back to the sea thundering in never ending rage below, she faced them.

"Ynys Galon!" she cried, "home of the sons of Dark Morgan, fierce men and bloody all! now shalt thou be desolate, and only the cormorant shall bring the spoils of ocean to divide on thee. The Jewel of thy kings is gone and disaster shall come upon thee : ruin, with the loneliness of the desert, shall be thine till that Jewel return. The sea-wolves shall have thee for a den no more till they come to thee by the distaff, bringing again the token of thy chiefs. But for these now whom Nuada has cast off : Woe ! woe to them !"

Then, while all the men quaked for fear, she

turned and with one loud, blood-freezing shriek, leaped into the roaring seas below, that flung up a cloud of spume to meet her.

So ended the witch of Ynys Galon.

It fell about this time that, as I have said before, Will's mother, daughter to old Rhys and foster-daughter to the then parson of Dolgoch, married Harry Lwyd, second cousin to my father ; staying behind at the parsonage when her husband sailed away on what proved to be his last voyage. For two years later his home-coming vessel was wrecked upon the Scilly Islands, and he perished without ever seeing the little son born to him in his absence. The child had been christened Will, and from Will ab Harry had become in course of time Will Barry, my foster-brother. The widow had lived on at the parsonage tending her bed-ridden foster-father, till he died in extreme old age ; and, my father being left a widower about that time, she had taken up her position as general overseer and superintendent of all things domestic at Dolgoch.

But before that, about the time of her husband's death, there fell upon her father and the islanders that dreadful stroke of the portending of which I spoke at the beginning of this chapter.

A thick smoke first apprised the men of Pwllwen that harm had come upon the sea-wolves' den with the dawn of a new day. At once they put to sea and sailed away for the island, where, just off the entrance to the neck they came upon a strange ship flying the black flag. Instantly she showed fight, and they, swarming aboard, slew every man of her crew, saving only the last, whom they kept for future questioning.

Inside the harbour they found an awful sight; every house of the Rover's town of Treforgan was burning, and on their thresholds and in the ways between nothing but corpses, heaps and mounds of dead folk; for of all the Ap Morgans not one remained alive. Mingled with these were the stark forms of more than a hundred and fifty of the strange ship's men, showing that the sea-wolves had died as fiercely as they lived.

Then they turned to their prisoner, and with a twisted cord about his temples they forced him to confess. He told them all: how Ulloth had suddenly reappeared in the West Indies with a wonderful tale of a Welsh island stacked full of treasure, and, loading down a great ship with a treble crew, had sailed to take it.

They landed at the grey of morning, when all the village was asleep, and, first slinging ashore four carronades loaded with grape shot, they surrounded the houses and set fire to the thatches to burn the inmates out. Then of a sudden, like devils possessed with fiercer devils, out swarmed the Ap Morgans, old men and boys, women and very children, armed anyhow and falling on so furiously as almost to overwhelm the attackers. Volleys of grape at twenty yards' range had first restored the balance and then numbers soon told their tale; for, in spite of the fall of Ulloth, whom old Rhys hewed asunder, the pirates in the end prevailed, but at such a tremendous cost of life to themselves that in revenge they massacred every human thing that drew the breath of life on Ynys Galon, even to the helpless babies.

Only a third of the butchers came out of that horrid slaughter alive, and they, quitting the shambles to defend their ship from the nearing boats, had fallen in turn beneath the so swift avengers.

This was the prisoner's story, and as soon as it was over, Morris Las, then a young man, had stepped forward and dashed out the wretch's brains with his half-pike, thus completing all possible vengeance upon the murderers of his kin.

But in laying out the heaps of slain for burial they found one person still breathing. He was a man so old as to be almost childish and was hurt to death, but he yet lived long enough to tell the tale of Ulloth, of Megan's flight with the Jewel, and of the last words and prophecy of the old witch the moment before she threw herself over the cliff to death.

The Pwllwen men questioned him very eagerly about the treasure, but he pretended to know nothing about it, and, as they could not twist the cord on him, they were forced to stand by and see him die, taking the secret of the galleon's wealth with him.

Many and many a time had Ynys Galon been searched since then, but no trace of the hidden gold had ever been found, till now the tenants had come openly to scoff at the story among themselves and only the men of Pwllwen still believed it. The witch's words were held as gospel prophecy by these last, who, since the massacre, had boldly called themselves Ap Morgan and watched and waited eagerly for the return of the missing Jewel, without which they might not attempt to take possession of the island or hope to discover the treasure. And meanwhile they

kept themselves ready to sail upon the instant, whenever the first gleam of that bloody old token should light their eyes again. Three years before the appearance of "Mister" Morgan, Will Barry in his impatience had fitted out a ship to range the Spanish Main in quest of the missing symbol, but nothing had come of it saving the confirming of Will Barry's position as leader of his kindred.

This story had always appealed to me to the full as strongly as to any Ap Morgan of them all, and now, standing beside my foster-brother's bed and gazing at the fateful gem in his hand, the whole long string of blood and battle connected with it rushed vividly upon me, parching my throat and lips with excitement. I looked from my father to Will as they gazed into each other's eyes for a full minute, burning with impatience the while, till at last, to my staggering disappointment my father said, in a voice which showed how much moved he was, "Say nothing for to-day. To-morrow we will talk it over. Doctor! forget all about this Jewel. Do not breathe a word of it till I give you permission. Remember! — that ruby shines brightest when it sees the blood running freest!"

CHAPTER VII.

"A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY."

NEXT morning, immediately after breakfast, my father bade me accompany him to Will's bedroom. We found the patient waiting anxiously, propped as before, but the Jewel was nowhere in sight.

"Well, and how do you feel this morning? Better, eh?"

"So well that I should very much like to get up," answered Will.

"Ha! I see. Want to go over and claim Ynys Galon, eh?"

"Yes, sir. I shall claim it now as soon as I am well. I intend taking old Morris Las and the rest. We will all settle there together and begin over again."

"As pirates?"

"I don't know," answered Will, dubiously.

"Well, at any rate you will have to wait till you are thoroughly recovered, for, remember, there is the man from whom you got the Jewel to be reck-

oned with, and he seems to be a determined fellow at all events. What is he like? Describe him!" pursued my father.

"He is taller by an inch than I am, and he is handsome and shapely enough to fool a woman or please a man. Strong, too, and used to depending on his sword. I know that because he seemed so utterly at a loss without it, which is about the only reason why I got the better of him. He is also a seafaring man," answered Will.

"It can't be Ulloth, for your grandfather killed him."

"No! and this man is not older than I am."

"Do you know who he is?" queried my father.

"Mister Morgan," answered Will, with an inscrutable smile.

"Morgan ap Megan vch Morgan Ddu, perhaps?" returned my father.

"We shall know some day — before long, I hope," quoth my foster-brother.

Here I broke in. "Don't you think he might be over at Ynys Galon now?" said I.

"Well! he'd be hardly likely to stop there with a single boat's crew, and there's been no ship seen in the offing this week past," responded my father.

"I'd like to go and see, anyhow," persisted I.

"It wouldn't be a bad plan," mused my father.

"Ah, sir, just think! If this man and his boat's crew are on the island, they can lie in wait at the harbour neck and sink as many boats as choose to attempt an entrance, or they could pick off the people in them, and all without exposing themselves for an instant."

"But," argued I, "if they are on the island, it is to seek for the buried treasure. Therefore they will be exploring the caves and I need not land at all. I can hold my boat close enough in to take a good look at the caves, while still keeping out of musket shot. Old Morris Las will go with me and we can take the skiff."

Will shook his head and my father laughed, while I said no more for fear of causing a blank refusal to my scheme. As things stood I might go, pleading that I had not been positively denied, should my father take me to task on my return. I was very glad therefore to see the door open at this moment and the doctor enter. Seizing the opportunity, I stole away to the library, where upon the wall hung a very heavy musket, the contemplation of which had often bred a lust for battle in my soul. Snatching this down, I hastily bestowed a supply of ammunition about my person and then,

almost furtively, passed through the hall and into the wood.

I do not remember to have often reached Pwllwen in so short a time as I did that morning, though on account of my dignity I had to pull up before coming to the bridge in order to strut down the street in approved style: the which I did, as the glances of the maids and the smiles of their mothers showed. Straight on I kept, saluting Evan Black Lion punctiliously as I passed, but not halting till I reached the beach, where, as I expected, I found old Morris.

As soon as he heard my plan he fell in with it at once, not, as I now think, because he had any idea of our fetching up with Mister Morgan and his boat's crew, but rather because he was pleased to see me take such interest in the island and judged it well to keep that interest alive.

I, of course, did not mention the recovery of the Jewel to him, pleading only a sort of general watchfulness against danger as justification of my anxiety, and was very well pleased to note his eagerness to approve my motives. Therefore, inside a very few minutes we had pushed off, old Morris in the stern of the skiff with his one hand on the tiller and the other on the turn of the sheet,

ready for every puff and current betwixt us and our goal, while I sat forward, nursing my great musket which was crammed with buckshot and slugs.

Ynys Galon is not visible from Pwllwen by reason of the bold mass of Trwynhir thrusting so far out to sea. Close under the western face of this cape there lies a cluster of pinnacle rocks, just covered at high tide. They have been known from time immemorial by a name signifying "The Teeth," and betwixt them and Trwynhir the current whirls and races with a cruel, hungry strength, daunting even the hardy boatmen of Pwllwen. But Morris Las knew the reach and lie of every wash along that coast, and now he held well out to the open sea, avoiding them all, until we had opened out the view of the island, when he tacked and bore up straight for the southeast shoulder of it.

Eagerly did I scan the frowning cliffs which render that island totally inaccessible, save only at one point in the eastern end where a narrow and tortuous cleft gives dangerous entrance to an inner harbour, on the shore of which the old sea-rovers had built their town.

But there was no sign of man and we had purposely left the harbour upon our right, planning to examine that last. For the present we kept south-

west along up the coast, close-hauled and near enough inshore to note any boat that might be lying off any of the caves with which the line of cliffs is honeycombed.

Presently I heard the louder booming which betokened that we were nearing the ever-raging pandemonium at the southwest point of the island, known from its terrible formation as "The Jaws," with which, as with "The Teeth," mentioned earlier, I was destined to make dreadful acquaintance. This day, however, all that was far from me, and I was pleased to see old Morris ease away and lie so close across ere the sheet slipped out still more for the run along the northwest line of the coast.

There is this difference betwixt the two coasts of Ynys Galon, to wit, that while the southern is a clean drawn one, the other has several little capes thrusting bold escarpments more or less far out into the sea. This necessarily results in leaving but short sights to people bent on such an errand as ours was, and therefore I kept a keen lookout as far as possible. We had not settled on the run more than a short stretch before my eagerness was justified, and I discerned, standing out from behind the first bold cape, a large boat loaded down with men.

No need to call old Morris; he saw it as soon as its stem showed, and quick as thought rallied and stood over as if for the mainland. But there was no "if" about the others' intentions, for we saw them sharply lay a course to bring them across our bows within a mile, or if we outsailed them, then to bring us in line with the brass gun we could see glittering on a heavy platform forward. Quick at that old Morris stood right about for the way we had come, muttering from somewhere behind the blue patchwork of scars that was his face, "Let them follow, they'll soon get tired of that."

Follow they did, but I knew there could be no fear of the result of such a race, as they themselves made haste to confess; for, almost before old Las' chuckle died away, I saw a dozen flashes along their gunwale and the sea spurted in as many places round us as the bullets fell short or went wide.

"Down! lie low!" croaked old Morris, sharply, suiting the action to the word as far as he could, while still keeping firm hold of sheet and tiller. Even as I obeyed I heard another scattering volley and the sing of bullets about us, together with the rip of one that passed through our canvas, but so low down as to make no difference in our speed.

"Ah, boy Ivor! that's no matter," quoth my companion, chuckling anew, with his eye over the stern. An instant later he laughed outright as he sat up and cried in derision.

"See them go about. They mean to try and head us off round the other end of the island. Somebody in that boat has seen this skiff lying on the beach at Pwllwen. Never afloat though, I reckon, or they wouldn't be fools enough to lay after us with that Dutch galliot of a craft. Ivor! I reckon that's Mister Morgan and his friends enjoying a little sail — I shouldn't wonder."

"Well, if it is, he'll — but it's nonsense, Morris. He must see that with our speed and the weather gauge as we go round, we can slip past him as we please," said I.

"They don't intend to try and overhaul us. What they look to do is to be snug in behind the cliffs beyond the harbour neck and try us with that brass gun if they can do no better."

"Then why didn't they try the gun here?" queried I.

"Perhaps they were afraid there might be other boats on the other coast of the island. And then again perhaps it wasn't loaded, for I saw them put a port fire to it and it wouldn't catch."

This last seemed to be good enough as an explanation, though hardly creditable to pirates who might be attacked at any moment. However, I let it pass, asking him "What next?"

"Well," replied he, looking steadily at me, his two grey eyes twinkling like pike-points, "I'm thinking after all that I would like to make sure about Mister Morgan. You see maybe they are only preventive officers, and then how Pwllwen would laugh at us if we mustered the lads and brought out the boats for that. Ho! ho!"

This struck me as a very likely view of the case. I did not stop to consider that revenue officers generally try a little preliminary investigating before turning loose with muskets, and the suggestion of adventure contained in old Morris' last words jumped too nearly with my youthful inclinations to leave room for cool reasoning. Therefore I fell in with it at once.

"All right, Morris, let us make sure by all means. How will you do it?"

"This way;" and to my astonishment and delight he once more brought the skiff round and ran as freely as before on our original course. By this time, however, the other boat was clean out of sight round the bluff. As we slipped along within

pistol-shot of the cliffs, once more old Morris explained.

"It's like this. You know there are two or three sharp noses of rock between this and the harbour neck, and as they'll about hug the cliffs all the way, why we'll follow, keeping behind one nose till they've rounded the next. There's only a short run betwixt the two last, and there we'll hold right down on them. They'll be lying to and all looking the other way at first, but as soon as they see us we'll swing sharp out and with the way the skiff will have on we shall easily haul out of range of them while they are trying to catch the wind. And we shall still have been close enough to recognise Mister Morgan if he's there."

"And if he is?" queried I.

"Well, as they tried their muskets on us, it's our turn now. When we open out the sight of them you'll stand by with that long Tom of yours, and when I give the word you'll loose right into the thick of them. If we manage it just as they come round, it'll stop the gun for a minute if it does no more. D'ye see?"

"I do," answered I, my heart beating high at the prospect of so fine drawn a hazard with Death. "I'll not miss, you may wager."

"D'ye think so? Don't be too sure. Ivor boy, there's a vast difference between shooting at birds and shooting at something that shoots back. It makes the bravest man tingle so that he may well miss his first shot. Look! your hands are trembling now."

Sure enough they were, and I was wroth and shamed both at my apparent weakness. "I'm no coward!" I cried hotly.

"There never came a coward yet from Dolgoch, Ivor," answered old Morris. Then he laughed his grim old laugh again as he broke into a strain that smacked more of piracy than honest smuggling:

"Lay back your main tops'le,
And your foresheet let go,
For the plank and the plunge
To the sharks down below."

This he sang in English, though he never used to brag of knowing that language. Next he said, reverting to our own: "That is why I told you to be ready now, so as to give you time to steady down again. But mind, you are not to lay finger to trigger or lift the musket at all unless I give the word. Then skip lively."

By this time we were rounding the first of the short capes, and something in my companion's

face caused me to look ahead. I was just in time to catch sight of the stern of the other boat as it glided on round the nose next in front.

"The lubbers," growled my companion in deep scorn. "I do believe they are revenue officers after all, to keep so bad a look-out as that."

"I hope not!" exclaimed I involuntarily.

"Ho, ho!" laughed old Morris in unholy glee. "Good! Good!" And he continued grinning and nodding as I reddened with new shame at my bloodthirstiness. You see I was but a boy yet after all, in spite of my fine boasting, and did not perhaps realise all the bearings of the business in hand.

The last near shave of discovery caused old Morris to bring to for a little while, since, as he remarked, the next reach was longer than this one, and we must give them time to double the third nose ere we passed the second. I was terribly impatient while we drifted idly along, but after we got under way again the stratagem was justified, there being no sign of a sail betwixt the capes when we rounded the second. Then as we reached along nearer and nearer, my courage grew cooler and cooler; but so also did the stubbornness of my mind grow stiffer, and when we passed the

third cape and saw before us the fourth and last, I cleared my throat in a rage of self-contempt. I felt my face go red as I thought of all my eagerness both in Will Barry's chamber, and afterwards when we first turned to follow the pirates. I could almost have cried for shame.

Old Morris was watching me with the ghost of a grin in his eyes, and when my glance encountered his he nodded sagely:

"Ah, Ivor, I know you better than that: you wouldn't go back now if I asked you to."

The idea of him wishing to turn back tickled my fancy so irresistibly that I broke into a peal of laughter. "No! I would not! although I do feel so funny."

He laughed too at that. "You take it too serious like. When it's all over you'll wonder to think how simple it was, and you'll swear it was nothing at all. Just keep steady and we'll pull through all right."

After this I felt better, and carefully shook my musket to see if the priming was all right. "That's it, son," quoth my companion, approvingly, "and now we'll stand in to get the reach for that last nose."

The strain of those few moments during which

we put inshore was far more severe than anything I remember since, though I have been in many dangers that were vastly greater. I lay it, however, to this being my first brush with Death in cool blood.

And now mechanically I watched the tiller move and we ran smoothly and steadily along the front of that last cape. To this day I can recall with startling vividness the white fluff where the ripples cushioned themselves along the port bow as we pressed them back. Behind that point of rock and not two hundred yards away the pirate boat must be lying. My fingers itched upon the trigger.

And now we were abreast of it and old Morris shifted the tiller once more, keeping so close under that I could certainly have touched the cliffs with a boat-hook had I tried. Then another slight shift and we were bearing straight for the flapping sail of the boat which yawed and washed before us. Its crew did not notice us at first, and we had time to note them well. There was no mistaking the figure amidships; it was the loser of the Jewel, and with him fifteen or twenty of the most hardbitten ruffians that ever dried in chains.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH OLD MORRIS SHOWS HIS SKILL.

SEVERAL of them were busy with the brass gun forward, the captain directing, and it was one of these who, straightening up to mop his brow, first saw us and yelled to the rest.

"Steady! steady, Ivor," spoke old Morris coolly. "Stand by with the musket, but don't lift it till we are well in range. Then aim aft, and I'll give the word."

We were by this time within fifty yards, and could see plainly the uproar amongst them. One or two hastily seized and put out oars. The helmsman, standing, gesticulated wildly. One flew to the sheet. Some snatched up muskets and hurriedly blazed away at us. Zip! zip! hummed the balls, too wildly aimed to hit us — and still the skiff rushed on, straight as death, in answer to that grim old sea-wolf at her helm. Then I lifted the musket to my shoulder and heard the deep growl of old Las.

"Now!"

Glancing along the sights as coolly as ever I did, all my fears forgotten, I took deliberate aim and fired full into where they clustered on the after-thwarts. That double charge told home, and never shall I forget the roar of howls and curses which burst forth at the flash. The boat yawed off again, the steersman's arm going round like a windmill where it was broken close up, and there was a writhing knot of maddened pirates falling all over him. I saw their captain coolly leap over them and seize the helm, and at the same moment my companion put the skiff round and we stood over as if for Trwynhir, while in a fog-horn of a voice he roared:

"Lay back your main tops'le,
And your foresheet let go,
For the plank and the plunge
To the sharks down below."

Above the horrible words of that song, however, I could hear still more horrible curses from the other boat, and, louder yet, the voice of their captain to those with the oars.

"Round with her! Round with her! Bring her round for the gun to bear."

I was hurriedly ramming home a ball into my

musket, and though we were hauling away as swift as a swallow, yet I determined to try a long shot at the gunner as he laid his gun. There was short time for aim, and therefore my pride got a shock, for I missed my mark. But perhaps I did better, for I hit the fellow standing beside him with the port fire, breaking his wrist and causing him to drop his light overboard.

That was another half a minute gained, precious indeed, for the tangle of blood and blasphemy had now straightened itself out, and their sails were drawing like ox ropes. Then the dreadful song broke off in the middle of a word: my companion shut his jaws like a steel trap, as he brought the skiff up and laid a new course, broadside on to that grinning brass muzzle. We could see their captain squint along the gun as he bent to lay a spunk of fire to it.

"Lie low, Ivor," snapped old Las, shifting his helm, and instantly as I obeyed I could yet discern the flash, while at the same time I felt the skiff whirl round stern on to it and heard the whizz and splash as the shot struck a full length away upon the starboard bow.

"A rare gunner, that captain," muttered old Morris. "I'll lay he's captured many a ship with

a Long Tom alone. We've got to look slippy if we get clean off."

It was a wonder to us both to note how well and smartly the pirate boat sailed, in spite of her seeming clumsiness. Though the skiff was rushing along like a gull, yet our lead increased but slowly. They were busy reloading their gun, and I could see that old Morris was grimly anxious about the next shot. "If only they miss with this next I'll put them high and dry, and do it so shipshape it'll maze them to think of it," said he.

I didn't fully appreciate his last words just then; I was busy wondering if we should be pooped or what. I saw their terrible captain lean forward once more with his sparkle of light, I caught the flash and my heart stopped suddenly beating as I realised that the smoke made the background to a picture of the ball striking the water half a dozen lengths in rear, but in a dead line for our stern. I was acutely conscious of a hissing rush, I felt a shower of spray in my face, and then that same old chorus burst out afresh in triumph. Half-way through, however, it stopped for old Las to explain to me:

"The shot took the side of a little wave and glanced off to port. 'Twas close enough, though,

to have smashed our oars had we been rowing. But what of that! a miss is a miss and makes no odds anyway.

> For the plank and the plunge
> To the sharks down below.

Aroo! Ivor, but that chap is a rare gunner — I should like to sail along with him once for a treat."

It was wonderful how the scent of danger loosened the old sea-wolf's tongue that usually was so mute.

All this time he was still keeping the same course, and when I looked ahead I saw that we were drawing straight for the cliffs of Trwynhir, where even a limpet could not land and the surge never ceased its weltering uprush or hushed its baffled roaring. I looked back to old Morris. He was watching me intently, and now he grinned like a ship's figurehead.

"It's all right, Ivor! Mister Morgan thinks he's got us already. I reckon he knows we can't land anywhere here in front, and he's already hauling over a touch. See him! shaping for a point just out from the forefoot of Trwynhir! You may lay the boys were careful not to explain to him about the 'Teeth' over there, and the tide

is lip-lipping two foot deep on the ledge. Presently there'll be some other lip-lipping when he gets on the ledge too."

I think I began by joining in my companion's grin: I know that I ended in an uproarious laugh, which was a great relief to me, and after that I seemed to be as hardened to the situation as he was.

We were heading well inland from the nose of the great cape, and he now began to make short tacks and to hang occasionally in stays as though he had lost the good breeze, the sight of which induced the pirate to hold well out for fear of losing it also. Old Morris was watching it all keenly, and now, muttering something beneath his breath, rose and looked earnestly from the point of Trwynhir over to the island, carefully noting the position of the pirate between. Satisfied at length, he kept his gaze fixed upon the latter for a moment or two longer, and then, plumping down on his thwart, tacked and stood along parallel to the cliff as if attempting to slip between the cape and our pursuers.

At this move we could see them alter their course, closing in to cut us off at once. Five minutes of this: ten minutes, and I could see

them laying the gun. Nearer and nearer we came; I nervously expecting every second to hear the report. Glancing round to my companion, there was the same old grin on his features, but even while I gazed he nodded.

"Got them! Look!"

I turned just in time. First one of the pirates in the bow sprang up and yelled, pointing ahead as he did so. Then every man of them raised up to look, and the one steering to jam the tiller over. Then he swung it back again, but it was too late.

She yawed, leaped forward again and struck with a force that pitched the one in the bows head foremost overboard, with the brass piece hard after him.

"Hard and fast," commented old Morris dryly. "No! she'll not sink unless she backs off, and that's not likely. I can just see the tip of the inner Dog Tooth and the tip of the outer, and so I know that where she is there is hardly half a fathom at spring tide. Now we'll haul up into the wind and reach out past them for room to run home. Then we'll fetch out a couple of boatloads of the lads and clap that gunner where he'll look uncommonly handsome;" and suiting the action

to the word, he wore the skiff and laid a course out for the open sea.

When we came abreast of the stranded boat a fusillade from the muskets greeted us, useless, because we were out of range. Nevertheless old Morris stood up and hailed them in English, holding the helm steady with his knee the while — and they ceased firing to catch what he said. I never heard a voice ring out so far at sea.

"Ahoy, Mister Morgan! I'm going to bring out a couple o' boats to rescue you. It 'ud be a mortal shame to let you drown, when you'd look so handsome at the gallows arm with the bracelets on. Ahoy!"

This angered them so that they raised a long yell of rage, and whipping up their muskets once more they cracked off in another waste of ammunition. Then as we gained room enough we slacked off again in a long run down for the harbour of Pwllwen, while the last I saw of the pirates was the whole crew, save the captain, standing and shaking their fists at us and, no doubt, blaspheming heartily.

The captain appeared to be taking soundings with the boat-hook, though perhaps he was fishing

for the fellow who pitched overboard. Or again, it may have been for the six pounder.

The whole way to Pwllwen I was in a fever of impatience, in direct contrast to my companion, who might have been returning from fishing, so absolutely calm, not to say wooden, was he. Long before we reached the beach I had made signals that brought all the place down to the water's edge, and when we ran gently in to the landing it required a very short time to tell our news. Old Morris told it.

"There is poor Mister Morgan and some of his friends getting their feet wet on the Teeth ; we'll take out the boats and bring them home."

A long chorus of jokes greeted this, and while the young boys sped swiftly to the cottages to bring weapons and gear for the men, these got the boats afloat. Old Morris and I transferred ourselves to my father's fast long boat, into which those boasting purest Ap Morgan blood sprang to join us immediately she floated. The weapons, oars, sails and tackle were speedily flung aboard, and I began to indulge high hopes. Our boat was the fastest in the place, and therefore it was likely we should have the honour of finishing with the pirates all to ourselves, before the others could

come up. But already I noted with gathering dismay that the rest of the boats were off while we remained waiting for the rum old Morris had ordered.

I chafed at the delay, but the others in the boat were imperturbable and I could not exert any authority, for was I not son or brother to them all, and were they not to know what was good for me? I was right glad therefore to see Evan Black Lion running down with the long bottle and the mugs.

"Stand by with the mugs, lads," cried Morris. "Here, Ivor, son, take this," handing me some rum in a pewter; "'tis a seaman's drink. Now here's a toast. Dolgoch never bred any but the right sort, but the latest was always as good as the best, and so is young Ivor here in the boat with us. He's as sound at the broaching as anything I ever saw. Good luck to him!"

Then they all shouted in my honour, and I made a manful endeavour to swallow the rum, but it stuck in my throat and nearly choked me. Old Morris laughed and clapped me on the back.

"Ah, but you'll learn to drink it in time, for you're the right sort and you'll see the roaring times yet, I'll warrant you."

Almost before I had wiped my eyes clear of the tears the rum had brought I found we were well

away, old Morris at the tiller as before, and I knew we should win the race. As before, too, he held well out till he had crossed the inshore currents and got the full sweep of the breeze, while the others were still ploughing against the wash and with the lofty sweep of Trwynhir to break and chop their wind. They were slower also by far than we, and I was heartily pleased as one by one we fetched them abeam and then watched them slowly dropping back over the starboard quarter. Already more than an hour had gone since I caught the last glimpse of the pirate's boat on the rocks, and I wondered what had become of them in the meantime. The tide was falling, and I looked to find them high and dry and as helpless as so many landed sharks. Judge of my consternation then, when, having at last opened out upon the Teeth, we found them clean and bare of either boat or pirates! I stared in dismay at their black tips and tossing surges.

"But we left them stranded on the Teeth with half a dozen holes in their boat, to judge from the way she sank to the gunwales." I expostulated to old Morris as if he were responsible for this disappearance.

He merely shifted his quid and spat over into

the sea, having a trick of chewing tobacco, first caught, I believe, from smoking those foreign things, cigars.

Then one of the old salt-cakes for'ard said hoarsely to him, "Sure you saw her strike?"

"Sure you see me?" demanded old Las.

That stopped all argument, and accordingly we held our tongues till we were alongside the very spot where we had, as I said, "left Mister Morgan fishing for guns and men."

There was no mistaking the spot: a long, flat-topped ridge of rock, more than half-tide high, with its surface studded here and there with humps and lumps and pinnacles of harder rock lifting so as to be even with top tide. Upon this ledge were plentiful indications of the disaster. The brass gun lying sullenly wedged between two smaller points, here and there small arms, a musket or two, and a pair of sea boots, as though kicked off to prevent their pulling some swimmer under. Still more suggestive, however, than all the rest, the body of a dead pirate lay, face down, half in, half out of the water, the heavy boots wedged in a crevice, the upper part of the body rising and falling amongst the brown seaweed as the little wavelets gently lifted and sank again with the receding

tide. The cause of the death was not drowning, though, as could be plainly seen: the bald circle on top of the skull was completely stove in.

"That is the fellow pitched overboard when she struck," quoth old Morris; "struck his head on the 'Teeth' and got both killed and drowned, I reckon."

"Where do you reckon the rest are?" queried Rowland Hir from the bows.

"Put your boat-hook down and touch the bottom," answered Las.

"Couldn't reach it with a ship's mast," grunted the other, vainly sounding and jabbing with the long boat-hook.

"That is where Mister Morgan and his friends have the best of you," quoth Morris with a sardonic grin. "I reckon they can all touch it with their noses — that's where I reckon the rest are," concluded he.

"Then how did the boat get drowned too?" queried I.

"Like enough they got out, and shoved her off: then they climbed in and she sunk beautifully with them all. I take it downright unhandsome of Mister Morgan and his friends, though, to put us to the trouble of coming out here for nothing. How-

ever, we had better take those boots and that six pounder aboard and then get home before dark."

The other boats had come up by this time, and great was the disappointment and loudly was it expressed. There was no help for it, however, and, as the sun was now setting, we put each about, reluctant and chagrined, for home.

CHAPTER IX.

TOUCHING THE DRAWING UP OF PLANS NOT EXECUTED.

When we reached the shore I felt some trepidation at the sight of my father, pacing to and fro just beyond the shingle, evidently awaiting my return. I feared he would be angry with me, as well he might, considering how unfilially I had gone off the second time for a brush with the pirates, without giving him warning that he might have taken the post of leader, as was his by right. It had been my eagerness and greediness for winning credit which had caused my transgression, and it smote me so sorely that I ceased to dread my father's anger in my great desire to beg his forgiveness. Therefore I strode at once over to where he had halted, bowing humbly before him while he greeted me, a little sternly as I thought.

"Well, sir?"

At that I felt his reproof so just as to leave me no word that I could say, saving only:

"Forgive me, father, I forgot and I am not fit to be reckoned a man yet —"

"How, sir?"

But I thought I could discern his voice less stern, and the joy of that found me my tongue again, so that I pleaded most eloquently for my lack of reverence, ending up though, in a sentence of the oddest — "and I hit both times I fired, father."

I had seen his face relaxing to my urging and, towards the end, even dawning into a smile; but at the last words I spoke he burst into a pleased laugh, and "Ah! my son! my son!" Then breaking off, he added in another voice, "How much he does remind me of his mother."

At this, almost the only time I ever heard him mention the parent I never knew, I turned my face away that my glance might not embarrass him, but well pleased to hear him so express himself, for thereby I felt assured that I stood as high in his affections as before my conduct of the afternoon. There was a pause of a moment or two and then he took my shoulder, and we started for the Black Lion; the men, who had before stood back so as not to intrude upon our meeting, now accompanying us.

At the door of the inn we halted, where my

father, seating himself upon the bench there, commanded old Morris Las to stand forth and tell his story while Evan Landlord supplied us with ale to accompany it. It was fallen dusk by this, a thing whereof I was mightily glad ere long, for, while every man pressed round to listen, you would have thought — to believe that unblushing old seadog's story — that I was the one who did all the smart and clever things of the action, while he had merely accompanied me to note the whole and as a spectator who would afterwards be able to sing my glory to an admiring multitude, after the manner of bards.

So much was I distressed to hear myself thus exalted at his expense that I meanly tried to obtain revenge by greeting him, at the conclusion of his narrative, as a new bard is greeted, and calling him by the name which signified as if I said "Morris of the Silver Tongue."

Then I was hot at my own petulance and in the same breath begged him to forget my words, while I turned and broke forth into something like the truth of our doings, ending by crying out, "You all know old Morris Las and you all know me, and you can judge for yourself which of us is nearest to being right."

But my father was smiling, as I knew, and all the rest were shouting and laughing, and I saw it was no use and that they would ever believe old Las' tale for the pure pleasure of their love for me. So I was glad of the darkness and only wished I were away by myself for a little while. Then in my honour Evan Black Lion prayed my father to allow him to tap the ale and keep a free house for that night, whereupon the permission was granted. A stipulation, however, was made that some two or three should fetch down from Dolgoch the buck that had been seven days hanging, and a dozen huge loaves of the white bread the kitchen folk were so proud of. Then, Morris Las being first desired to attend us home, we bade them all good night, while they gave us a rousing cheer as we left the circle and passed up the street and over the bridge to the gates of the avenue. My foster-mother seldom dined with us, preferring the seclusion of her own apartments unless my father made a point of the matter, but to-night she first took old Morris and gave orders that he should be waited upon with the best the larder afforded, and then came in and joined us.

This I took for a compliment to myself, and before the meal was over I was become as proud

as a turkey-cock to hear my father recount to her the tale of the day's doings ; using a version of his own in which his father's partiality borrowed somewhat of the ornaments of old Morris' story wherewith to embroider the simplicity of my own.

I should have mentioned that word had been left with Morris acquainting him that Will Barry in the room above would be very fain of his company when he should have finished his meal, and there accordingly we found him when, having ended our own, my father and I repaired thither to a conference upon the situation. I did not exactly discern where the conferring could bestow a benefit, but of course I was eager to hear any discussion which might bear upon the new aspect of things ushered in by the reappearance of the Jewel. As soon as we entered I saw at a glance that, while Will knew of the stranding of "Mister Morgan," old Morris had learnt in return that the bloody old token was come home again to be reckoned with, and there was a look of subdued excitement about his eyes that I had not seen, even when he sang his pirate song the loudest betwixt the capes that day.

"Well, Morris," said my father at once, "have you told Will about the affair of to-day?"

"I have, sir, and he has told me about the Jewel."

"Ah well! the pirates are drowned, though," pursued my father, but in a voice not one-half so confident as the words.

"Perhaps!" responded the other significantly.

"You think they escaped then?"

"Perhaps," came again with the same significant inflection.

"I am sure they escaped," put in Will Barry doggedly.

"Why?" queried my father.

"Well, for one reason I am sure because I feel sure, and that is no reason at all. But do you think it likely, sir, that they would back off their boat without first roughly plugging the leaks with strips of clothing: quite good enough to keep them afloat?"

"Then why did they leave their arms and the boots, and further, how was it that they were not seen, when it is at least three miles to the island, or more?"

"Simply enough, sir. They must have pushed off immediately the skiff passed out of sight. They couldn't have done it later, when the tide went down and left the ledge bare; their craft was

too heavy for that. The captain was seen prodding round with the boat-hook, that was by way of discovering the bottom with a view to climbing overboard and shoving off. Possibly they threw the arms into the water to make believe they were all capsized and drowned, so that they might thus obtain time to get away. As exactly happened."

Old Morris was nodding approval to Will's speech all the way through, so now my father turned to him.

"What do you think, Las?"

"Just the same as Will Steward, sir. I thought so at the time."

"Then why didn't you act upon your opinion and give chase?" quoth my father.

"One thing was that Mister Morgan, if he did get away, would naturally head straight back for the harbour on Ynys Galon, and as he would see us coming he could lay himself out to welcome us. Whole fleets of King's ships before now have found out what that means in that harbour neck. Another thing that I wouldn't tell to any one but the present company, is that I had a sort of a liking for Mister Morgan, because he showed himself such a rare gunner and such a seaman when Ivor let drive into his crew of lubbers. I reckoned he ought to

have a chance, though I couldn't have given you any better reason then. Belike it was his blood, as I know now that he is kin to us all."

"Then you believe he is?" queried my father.

"Son of Megan, old Rhys Harries' daughter, that was sister to Will Steward's mother and third cousin to me," replied old Morris. "It is blood that tells, sir, and only the old Morgan blood could have stood to it so prettily as he did to-day. I tell you, sir, my heart warmed to see the way he trod those squirming lubbers under foot when he reached for the helm — and then the rare way he laid that gun!" There was a ring of pride in the speaker's tone as he ended.

"Aye, well, Morris, you are as stark a pirate to-day in your heart as ever Morgan Ddu was or this other Morgan is, so I will forgive your letting him escape. But now you must say what you think is best to be done. I intend to fall on to these rascals to-morrow morning — harbour neck and all. We will see whether they are to prowl about waylaying my people and shooting at my son. You surely cannot countenance him in that."

"Certainly not, sir, and next to killing him myself in fair fight I should best have liked to see Ivor's musket drop him this day, or to look for-

ward to Will Barry meeting him when he gets well. But remember, sir, that if you try that harbour neck in the daylight — not all the King's ships can force that! There are two bends in it and the cliffs are sheer up all round, topmast high. That one boat's crew can hold it against a navy. I think we had better try it in the night-time; not to-night, because they will be hard at it patching their boat, and will keep a keen watch beside for fear of attack. You know the old trick of hanging torches in the neck — well, sir, they could sink our boats with boulders from the cliff tops, or pick off the crews without our so much as getting a single stroke in return."

"If I were well so as to go with you, I could tell of a good plan," put in Will Barry.

"What is that?" responded my father.

"I should like to get well first, sir. I believe my plan would win, and I want to be the first man ashore on the island and the first to cross swords with Mister Morgan. I claim that right, first because he stabbed me, but next and most because I am chief of the Ap Morgans and lord of Ynys Galon now by right of this Jewel till I can stand upon the cromlech and keep it against all comers."

"Yes, that is all very fair; but how long do

you suppose he is going to wait? They could not carry any large stock of provisions in that over-crowded boat, and the island has nothing but sea-birds, rabbits, and what fish may be in the harbour. Now the time for eggs is past; they dare not waste ammunition on rabbits, and they are not likely to make much by fishing; so you see they will be up and gone long before you are out and about," said my father.

"Then they will go sooner than I look for, sir. To-morrow I shall be out of bed; next day downstairs; the third in the garden, the fourth in the wood, the fifth to Gorphwysfa, the sixth in Pwllwen. The seventh will find me ready for the boat and the harbour neck — do you think they will be gone before then, sir?" Will's tone was triumphant.

"What is to keep them there seven days longer? Whatever became of the galleon's cargo, it is not on Ynys Galon now, nor has been at any time since it was harried. My firm opinion is that the galleon went to the bottom with it. Mister Morgan may believe different, but his friends will soon get tired of crawling about like half-drowned rats in the caves, or grubbing about amongst the bushes: then they will compel him to return, and he will get off free for all the harm he has done."

"Do you think then, sir, that he will quietly submit to lose the Jewel, getting nothing in return, even revenge?" the speaker's nostrils were dilating at the mere thought of any man being such a backboneless cur.

"You forget that he thinks he killed you," objected my father.

"If he is an Ap Morgan, and cousin to me, he would kill every man in the parish but what he would get back the Jewel."

How my own feelings applauded the scornful words and tone of my foster-brother! I fear me much that we were but three rank savages there, confronting my father, for the eyes of old Morris too were gleaming like sun-lit pike-points.

"Well, Will, we shall see; but you have not told me your plan and so we will hark back a little. Morris, what is your plan? I know a man like you must have one."

"My plan, sir, is to wait a night or two till they get tired and discontented. That will mean a bad watch and the look-out man asleep most likely. Then we will just sail in at break of day and take our chance in the ruins of Treforgan."

"Diaoul! Morris! You Ap Morgans are ever the same. 'Luck and a long sword!' that was

ever your motto from Morgan Ddu down. But I like to hear it for all that; it rouses my blood so. None the less I think we ought to try a little stratagem. Now my plan is, choose a dark night, let the boats be manned; three boats with five men in each, so that if a boat be sunk the loss will not be too great at once. Have one boat — the little skiff, she being so fast and handy to steer — with only one man and a keg of powder aboard.

"When we come to the harbour entrance, this last boat to go a cable's length ahead of the others, with a match handy to a powder train. When it reaches the first bend, the man will clap the match to the train, leap overboard and swim back. The explosion will extinguish every torch in the neck, and the other boats will then dash in and take their chance. What do you say to that?"

"Very clever indeed, sir," quoth old Morris approvingly, "but it depends so much on so many things. I will go, of course, for if the gunpowder boat does not act all right we can still make the dash."

Will Barry's answer was an earnest appeal to my father. "But you will wait till I am well, sir,

will you not? I am your kinsman and I have served you faithfully — by all the laws of the Jewel you will grant me this?"

What could my father do but wring my foster-brother's hand and swear that nothing should be done till he could take his proper part in it. And I was so fain to hear and see both words and action that I fell a-shaking hands with old Morris too, whom I could see so well approved my father's decision.

Therefore it was settled that a sharp look-out was to be kept from Trwynhir in the day-time and a watch in the village at night until the wounded man should be a-foot once more. "And Morris!" concluded my father warmly, "let every man wear his weapons again as we used to do. This affair of the pirates will serve us for an excuse in London."

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH I FIND A PIRATE OF MY OWN.

When I went down to the village next day — after having first assisted to move my foster-brother to an armchair, receiving a sharp scolding from the testy old doctor for my clumsiness in the proceeding — I could perceive that the men went about more jauntily than had been their wont for a year or two past. From which I argued that they had felt the deprivation of their right to wear weapons more keenly than an outsider could have supposed. Not that they had ever heeded that order saving when quietly resting in Pwllwen betwixt the rushes of their business as free-traders. They had not been used to parading their weapons when at home, but the fact that the Ministers had issued an order prohibiting such doings was looked upon as an act of dire oppression and resented as such. Hence the satisfaction of Pwllwen to-day.

Since yesterday my own walking sword had

been exchanged for a goodly one of manful weight and length, and perhaps amid the general show I did keep my left hand very prominently resting upon the hilt, taking, as it may be, less conceit in my gold-headed walking cane than before I buckled on so pretty a weapon.

Something of the same feeling it was, I do not doubt, which made me greet with condescending affability the tenant folk I met in the street, reserving a warmer and a bluffer salutation for those of the old island blood. With old Morris I shook hands fairly, silently claiming thereby to rank as a man in virtue of our having shared no small danger together.

Thereafter, chary of words as befitted the gravity of veterans, we exchanged comments upon our hopes with regard to the pirates, and I fell a-cocking of my eye at sea and sky to note the signs of weather; upon which point I presently delivered my opinion, being greatly pleased to find old Morris receive and discuss it as briefly as if it had been that of Rowland Hir or Dick Shon or any other of his kinsmen.

Four days passed thus, and already my foster-brother's splendid constitution had so far outstripped his expectations and dumbfounded the

doctor that he had managed to stroll languidly into Pwllwen, with my shoulder to aid him, when there occurred a thing that was a great blow at first to me. We two were sitting upon an upturned boat, in company with old Morris, when word came from the look-out on Trwynhir that the pirate boat had left Ynys Galon and was standing away to the southwest.

Old Morris looked at Will questioningly.

"Ah, he will come back again. He is only going for more provisions or more men," said my foster-brother.

"I think so, too," endorsed the other. "All the same I will just put off in Dolgoch's long boat and see whether he is fairly leaving or not."

"I am also going," quoth I decidedly. As for Will Barry, he simply rose and strode, with a foot so steady as to surprise me, over to where the long boat lay, just awash, and sat down in her.

Old Morris nodded his head approvingly as he called for four men to jump in with us.

But though the long boat, even with its load of men and carrying the pirates' brass gun, was, if anything, faster than the skiff; yet we could not come up with the flying craft, whose long start enabled her to keep so far ahead that night would be

upon us before we could fetch up with her. Seeing that she would then escape in the darkness, we desisted from the pursuit; I with my mind quite comfortable, however, since I had sent a message to my father, explaining the need for haste before we set sail. As for Mister Morgan, I believed, as firmly as my foster-brother himself, that we should meet with him again, and in so stern a posture as would make the encounter a thing to be remembered.

As we stood back for home it did me good to see the colour so strongly set in Will's cheeks, and I had no fear now but that he would be ready and fit to take his part, when the time should come for settling with his cousin.

After dinner that evening there was another council in the library at home, but just as short this time as the other was long. In fact, it pretty well consisted of a single dictum from old Las.

"It is this way, sir. That boat stood down to the southwest just to throw us off the track. Where would they be going to that way? For Cornwall, or to veer round for Ireland? Big and ugly as it was, it is no deep-sea craft! No! they went on that tack so we could not overhaul them; then when they were clear away they would put about for Bristol."

"In that case we are rid of them for awhile, at any rate," said my father.

"Well, long enough to suit me and the lads. We have a bit of a job on that will need us to put out with the lugger for a few days," replied old Las, with a particularly wooden look all round.

My father laughed. "Good luck to the lugger, Morris. Here! try a sample of the cargo that never shows in her manifest though it wallows in her hold," and he ladled out another huge jorum of punch for that wily old pigtail.

At that the conversation became general, and after a few moments came to an end, as old Morris rose to take his leave. Next morning when I went into Pwllwen I was not surprised to find that he was gone, taking with him in the lugger a double crew of the stoutest fellows in the village, and leaving behind in special command as Will's lieutenant, Dick Shon — worthy of the trust, as you shall see. It would appear that the present enterprise was more than usually dangerous.

So the days passed without incident, saving that I held for incidents each new proof of my foster-brother's return to health and strength; keeping the fact secret from him, however, who had all a strong man's dislike to being considered an invalid.

Yet so happy was I to see him mend that I almost fell to loving the old doctor as having brought the matter out thus way by his great skill. But when I hinted as much to him while we were walking in the garden, he first snorted, and then, tapping his cane upon the box, took a double pinch of snuff to emphasise his dictum as he delivered it. "Young gentleman, it is not pills and potions that cure a man like that. It is years of free air, plain food and active regular living. Think of that some day when the gout puts the screw on you and you wonder what is the good of living. No, sir, a man who is only helped by doctor's stuff is a very poor creature indeed. Give me the man I have to draw blood from every now and again — that is the man at a push."

Then he extended the box, and we each took a pinch in due gravity at such a pronouncement.

The seventh day from the affair of the pirates passed without any return of Mister Morgan, and I began to be secretly excited, deeming that another encounter with him must by this time be very near. Now it is my habit upon retiring at night to fall asleep as soon as I am well laid down, but on this night I lay awake for a full five minutes, turning over an idea which had struck me as I entered the

room. Only once had I ever set foot on the island, and that was years ago in company with Will Barry. Racking my memory upon the point, I found that it held so faint a recollection of the topography of the place, that I felt I should be at some loss in the matter did we have to make a night attack, as had seemed to be foreshadowed in that first council. How could I take that prominent part in the battle which my glowing imagination had already pictured forth, if I should have to submit to be directed by some other one who should assume command of me merely by right of local knowledge? Clearly such a fate; such a shock to my pride; such a blow to my ambitions; must be avoided at all costs. To-morrow I would take the skiff and put out alone for the island, to polish up my cloudy recollection of its main features; more especially with regard to the harbour entrance. Having come to which bold resolution, I fell asleep, my conscience being as peaceful as my stomach was strong.

Next morning, accordingly, I sauntered casually down to the beach, having said nothing to any one at home concerning my intentions. I carried my great musket with me and had of course my long sword and a brace of pistols to my belt; the whole

armoury making me feel a match for half a dozen pirates with Mister Morgan at their head. On the way I stopped at the Black Lion to request Evan Landlord to send down a supply of eatables and drinkables, sufficient to stay my stomach upon while I should be gone, and then passed on to get the skiff afloat.

Dick Shon was lounging upon the beach, as was proper considering his position in the absence of old Morris, and he gave the order to the others to push the boat into the water. Of course he could not leave his charge to accompany me, but he pressed me to take Evan Pendre and Howell Pritchard instead, saying that some one ought to go with me. Now I had no mind to share my prospective glory with any one, therefore I simulated a fine show of indignation, with the result that I gained my point, though I could see my faithful friends were loth to let me set sail unaccompanied.

The day was beautiful. Up from the south a little breeze ruffled and teased the water, casting up baby seas that made the trim little skiff curtsey like the maidens at a dance, while the soft white fleeces above only made the sky look fairer. The glint of the brave sun upon the creamy foam wreaths turned them into banks and ropes of

gems, of a colour and sparkle such as would have shamed the jewel casket of the proudest lady in the land. How gloriously did they sheen and flash, crowning each wavelet as it rose with matchless coruscations, set so altogether lovely in the seas, which shaded from ice-green darker and clearer to the deep azure of the little hollows between. There is no part of the land which can rouse the blood and intoxicate the brain as the deep sea in its loveliness can do. As I passed the vision-barring bulk of Trwynhir I cast my eyes eagerly ahead to the goal of my voyage. Fair and still it lay beyond, wooed by the laughing kisses of this summer sea and smiling at the caress of the soft whispering breeze. The dark front of its horrid cliffs was silvered by a soft haze, and now showed deceitfully tender and beautiful of aspect. Above their line the dying gold of the gorses swathed its swells with ambient flame, in sweet contrast to the dim purple of the newly opened heather. Here and there swept reaches of the deep bracken, and in the little ravines nestled bosky bush and graceful birch thicket, filling the picture with gentle suggestion of shady rest and peace — so fair an isle that seemed then, for all so foul with blood as it had been and was to be again.

But now I roused me from my musing, for I was come within reach of the harbour neck. I knew its general course, with the sudden turn to the left, the bend to the right and yet again to the left, with the remaining score of boat's lengths fully open and exposed to the fire of any defenders who might be manning the massive walls of the ruined town within.

I felt that to negotiate it safely would require no little nicety of handling, but I plucked up a bold heart and steered for the opening. All went well for the first score or so of lengths, and then I swung the tiller for the rounding of the first bend. At the turn I met so ragged a gust as almost jerked the sheet loose from my grasp, and I was fain to drop the sail at once, so violently did the little cockleshell of a craft rock beneath me. I saw at once that I must buckle me to work if I would win through safely, and without more ado I thrust out the pair of oars and bent my back to rowing. Then round the next bend and to the left again; but here a feeling that there might be pirates within became so strong that I changed my position and rowed face ahead, for I felt a mortal dread of being shot in the back.

When at last, the musket handy across my

knees, I swung round into the final stretch that slanted away from the starboard bow of the skiff at the turn, I felt a huge relief at seeing the ruins of Treforgan, so entirely lonely and deserted they appeared to be. In the easing of my apprehensions my mind went back with a bound to study the impregnability of the neck I had just passed. So narrow indeed was it for the more part that I wondered how the Ap Morgans had ever warped "Nuada's Fleshhook" through. In my amazement at the recollection I made a mental joke, and decided that they must have greased her well down from stem to stern and so slipped her through. The cliffs on either hand rose smooth and straight for forty or fifty feet, and absolutely destitute of crack or crevice to afford hand or foothold for man. Add to this the bends in its two or three hundred yards of length, and it was easy to understand old Morris' respect for its dangers when defended by a boat's crew of resolute men.

But now I was gliding over the placid bosom of a little oval sheet of rock-girt water some two or three acres in extent, fed by the silver tinkling of a little rill emerging from the mouth of a narrow glyn straight ahead. I did not long allow my gaze to wander, though; my interest was too curiously

taken with the roofless town on the right bank. The shore there was a perpendicular face of rock, where the scanty plain on which the houses stood appeared as if suddenly broken off, thus forming a natural quay stretching the whole length of that side. Two-thirds of the way along it a rude stairway had been blasted out, just wide enough for one man to pass at a time, and thither accordingly I pulled.

Making the painter fast to a ring, rusted half away, I loosed my sword in the scabbard, hitched my pistols handier to the front, and then, resuming my grip behind the lock of the musket, climbed boldly upward in the confidence born of so formidable an armoury. Arrived at the stairhead, I darted a glance amongst the ruins, but no foe was to be seen. The houses stood back in an irregular cluster, seemingly designed to hold several generations and branches of a family in each, so roomy did they appear at that distance. One house, however, larger than all the rest, stood well out and forward, within a few paces of the shore, and I knew it at once for Ty Mawr, the house in which the old chiefs had lived from first to last. I knew also the interior of it and what its arrangement was, from the tales and ballads concerning the

stark men who had dwelt therein in the days gone by. Its two great rooms, — the first a kitchen or common hall, and the inner or right hand one held more private to the family of its lord.

Nevertheless I gave a little start as I noticed that it had been rudely roofed anew with a thatch of weeds and brushwood, though I remembered instantly that, of course, the pirates here so lately would naturally require the shelter which they had thus obtained. The great square house looked fit indeed to shelter such a crew. There was a yawning doorway with charred posts a little to the left of the centre of its front, and this, with the two narrow window slits on either side of it, one lighting each of the rooms, were, as I knew, the only openings in those four grim walls. With cocked gun I stole cautiously up and peered through the nearest slit. I could see nothing in that dim gap, however, and so perforce I passed on to the doorway and entered. I found myself in a large room with a fireplace extending almost the whole length of the left side of it, and showing many signs of having been recently occupied, and that by a most sluttish set of housekeepers.

The hearth was piled with ashes and faggot ends, a rusty iron pot hung over it, foul with some

sort of pottage gone bad, and giving forth a most villainous stink. Everywhere were scraps of broken victuals, and in one corner an empty rum-keg staved in and useless.

Upon my right, beyond, and next to the back wall of the house, I discerned the doorway leading through the dividing wall into the inner room. Striding boldly over to that, I made to enter at once, but in the dimness of its shadow I stumbled over the threshold and fell headlong through. Even as I fell there gleamed a flash from the corner to the right and a shot rang out, the bullet flattening itself on the wall exactly in a line to have passed through my body had I remained upright. The musket dropped from my hands as I fell, but at the report I leaped to my feet and sprang back through the doorway as swiftly as I could fetch. Fast as I was, I was yet not fast enough to come clean off, for a second report deafened the echoes of the room, and this time the bullet gave me a nasty furrow through the muscles just behind the left armpit as I slightly turned in going.

Once in the other room I faced about and, whipping out sword and pistol, stood to consider what next.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCERNING MY PIRATE.

I WAS ashamed to run away, not to reckon the danger of being bagged from the window before I could reach the stairhead. The thought of this last caused me to wonder why I had not been potted on my advancing to the house, but the pain of the bullet tear prevented my puzzling long, so savage did it make me. Further, in the glance I had cast round as I rose from my fall I had seen only two forms of men plainly, though the shadows were deep enough for a whole crew to lurk in. As I have said, the walls of the house were unpierced by any opening saving the door and two windows to the front. If, then, the kitchen were gloomy, having a great doorway in addition to its strait window, what was to be said of the inner room, with one window gap alone to shoot its single pale shaft of light across the murk. Therefore I could not be sure of meeting only two inside, or I would have boldly rushed in

to the attack. The one who had fired first at me was lying in the right-hand corner of the room, at the window end and next the dividing wall, the other lay in the opposite corner.

From where I now stood I could see my musket on the floor beyond, and bitterly did I regret having dropped it in trying to save myself from falling. I was screwing up my courage to make a dash and regain it, when a stealthy noise from the room inside caused me to catch my breath and listen. It was a shuffling sound as of a limp body dragged by some noiseless ghoul over the worn flags towards the doorway. An eerie dread crept along my spine as I stood hearkening, like as when some one walks over a man's future grave, and I felt my courage sinking.

A stifled gasp, that was both groan and curse, from the shuffling horror within saved me, however, for at the sound I knew that those inside were merely human and not dead figures mocking life or vampires of the darkness. Instantly with that I choked back a sigh of relief as I decided that the shooter was either attempting to steal upon me unawares or intending to possess himself of the gun. In either case I would have a bout with him.

I stood upon the spring as when poised to catch the first grip in wrestling; in my left hand a pistol a-cock, and in my right the sword I hoped to prove.

Slowly the one inside drew near, keeping, as I afterwards found, close to the division wall until he came opposite the gun, where he turned and flung himself with outstretched hand to seize it.

Springing through with a mighty shout, I aimed a terrific down stroke at his head, putting the whole weight of my body into the cut. Swift as I moved, he was yet swifter in whirling his body backward and so avoiding the sword, which thus struck the stones and shivered its blade to fragments. Ere he could raise the musket he had seized, however, I had dropped my hilt and gripped the barrel, while with the pistol I hammered him over the head.

At the first blow he loosed the gun and seized me by the throat with one hand, while with the other he attempted to draw a huge knife. At the second his jaws clicked together and his fingers slacked — the third stretched him utterly senseless.

Instantly with that I snatched up the musket and took aim at where I could dimly discern the form of the second man. Something in the atti-

tude of it, however, stayed my finger even while it was closing upon the trigger; and, lowering my piece once more to the ready, I strode warily over towards the object. It was a dead man, and the dropped jaw and staring eyes were hideous to behold in the lurking shadows. Shuddering with a disgust I could not repress, I turned to retrace my steps to the one who might be still alive. As I did so, it struck me as being strange that he had made no attempt to gain his feet when I attacked him.

He showed no signs of returning consciousness, not even when, taking him under the arms, I dragged him back again to the rude pallet of heather from whence he had discharged his pistols at me. Doing this I noticed that one of his legs followed in a very queer fashion, and, looking closer, I found that it was bound clumsily round with a kerchief such as seamen wear. This was stiff with dried blood and showed why the fellow had crawled instead of walking. Laying him down full length, I bunched the heather into a pillow so as to raise his head well up, and then from my pocket drew the flask of Evan Landlord's brandy and poured a goodly draught down his throat.

That fetched him to. He opened his eyes very slowly at first, and I had time to notice the wolfish glare of them and how sunken and cadaverous his whole features were, with the stubble of half a month's beard bristling up through the blood now trickling freely from his head. As soon as his wits gathered he fixed a dull stare on my face, and then, not shifting his eye, like a flash made a dart for his knife.

But I was ready for that, and, savage at his ingratitude, I caught his wrist to the floor, dropping with both knees upon the muscle of his stretched arm, completely numbing it. Even as I did it my heart smote me for my cruelty, and I could have fallen a-cursing like a tavern ruffler for very shame and sorrow at my weakness. With vicious energy I flung his knife across the room and, with a bitter rage of self-contempt surging in my ears, I snatched a pistol from my belt. Seizing his other wrist — "You bloody villain!" I shouted, "I have a great mind to beat your head to jelly with this!"

To my surprise the fellow remained passive, only making effort to say, "I wonder what the young fool means in that lingo of his?"

Then I remembered that he possibly did not

understand Welsh, and so repeated my words in English.

"Oh, you have, have you?" replied he coolly. "Well, sonny, you can take your choice: either beat me to death right off or get me something to eat. And there's a taste of brandy in my mouth — I'd like another go at that too. Sonny, I'm nigh famished an' when you come in I was just a-making up my mind to take a slice off that," and he nodded over to the corpse in the opposite corner.

I shrank away from him in horror, but the hunger in his face bore out his words so plainly, that I lugged immediately the roll of beef and bread from my coat-pocket and handed it to him. He fell upon it just as a starved dog might do, crowding it so fiercely between his jaws that he began to choke. Seeing that, I tore away the remainder from his clutch, narrowly escaping being bitten in the doing of it. Thereafter I fed it to him in small quantities, and half-way through gave him a stout pull at my flask, noticing as I did so, that he took down the raw spirit without winking an eyelid.

When all the roll was gone, topped off by another drink, and he could not find another crumb, even

in the heather of his pallet, he lay back with a deep sigh of satisfaction and tried to smile. "You haven't such a thing as a pipe and a bit of 'bacca about you, eh, squire?"

"I'm not squire," said I; "my father is the squire, as you call it in English. I am sorry to say that I have no tobacco or pipe, as I do not yet use them, not being old enough."

He smiled very broadly at that, nettling me so thereby that I sharply demanded of him who he was and what he was doing here. Further, I required to know why he shot me.

"You *are* inquisitive," replied he, with a leer and laying great stress on the second word. "Now what should you say, young squire, if I told you as I was a gentleman as was just a-lyin' down for a quiet snooze in my own bed when a stranger comes a-marchin' in without fust a-givin' his name for the servant to announce him. O' course then I ups and blazes away at him for a murderin' thief and being so onmannerly to a gentleman."

"I should say you were a thundering liar, and I should say, too, that this island belongs to my father, and you will very soon find yourself laid by the heels to answer to him for being here," retorted I.

"And I should say that this island belongs to my captain, and you will very soon find yourself hung by the heels over a slow fire to pay for your being here," mimicked he.

"My father owns this island," snorted I.

"And Dew says he owns it," stuck in the pirate.

"Who is Dew?" demanded I fiercely.

"Oh, a gentleman friend o' mine," grinned he.

"Well!" cried I triumphantly, "I am going to tie you up now and carry you over to Pwllwen. My father will see to hanging you out of hand if the children don't drown you in the pool first." I was loosing my now useless sword-belt as I spoke, intending to bind his arms with it, but at the sight of that he wilted, seeming to be taken all aback for a minute or two. Presently, however, he tried another tack. "Would you take a man over and get him hung? a man as couldn't help himself: a man as you first beat about with a pistol and then fed with your dinner and your own flask. And a fine young gentleman like you, too! By gum, but you're a rum un, you are!"

"Why did you shoot at me?" persisted I.

"Because I was afeared you'd shoot me if I didn't drop you fust," replied he deprecatingly.

"Very well, then; you had your chance and

missed. Now it's my turn, and I'm going to hit; there's not much fear of missing when you shoot with a noose." I laughed at the jest as I said it — I think the grim blight of the place was turning me into as foul a villain as the one before me.

Yet it must not be supposed that I felt as cruel as my words in reality. Deep down I was so penitent for my roughness to this wounded man that I was in danger of being too tender with him, and, therefore, I was on my guard against what I considered my weakness. Perhaps he read my feelings; at any rate he said, suddenly, "Look a-here, my lad: now I'll put it to you fair an' square. You say your father is squire over yonder at Pwllwen; now if that's so, I've got that to say as 'll make us all good friends together. I suppose you've got a pretty good notion of what I am?"

"That I have," retorted I readily. "You are one of those villainous pirates belonging to Mister Morgan, who is son to Megan Rhys, who ran away with Ulloth from this island years before I was born."

"Oh, that much was true then, was it!" soliloquised the fellow. Then continuing in his proper voice — "You are right there, sonny, I am, or rather you're wrong, for I ain't. I was, though,

till after that blessed day you drawed us so nicely on to them blasted rocks out there. Oh, that was neat! stove me for'ard, that was neat! I know it was you: I seen you as you was a-risin' to shoot when you filled half our boat's crew as full of shot as if they was sparrows in the corn. Ho! ho!" and the ghastly scoundrel wiped the blood from his stubbly jaws as they stretched in unholy mirth.

"But I didn't do this," said I in some concern, touching the blackened bandage on his leg.

"That you didn't, sonny; or else I shouldn't be a-proposin' of this 'ere treaty. It's along o' that I'm talking now. That 'ere's the mark of old Dew; the one I called Cap'n just now, an' the one I reckon you mean by 'Mister Morgan.'"

"Oh!" was my mystified comment.

"Now I reckon, young gentleman," he went on, "as you're the brisk young spark as interfered when old Dew took Joe Corse and Batney and Loco along with him to look for the 'Jack.'"

"What's that?"

"The 'Jack'! the charm his mother gave him. He lost it up in your woods."

"You mean the Jewel."

"Aye, that's it, I reckon. Jack or Jewel, it's all one, anyhow. Well, he lost it cruisin' about in

your mud-shovelling place over there, an' he comes back to Bristol where we was enjoying ourselves, an' he was all swelled and sore and beaten black an' blue. Then he slaps a crew aboard an old tub of a boat an' we sails up here an' he takes Joe Corse an' Batney an' Loco, as I said, an' all four comes back swelled an' sore an' beaten black an' blue as before — all along of a lackey an' a boy, by gum."

"Will Barry is no lackey; he is a gentleman: my kinsman, and lord of this island under my father now," cried I hotly. "Moreover, he could hammer the whole boatload of you, three at a time, any day, and I'll warrant I could do the same by the best man of you all."

"That you could, sonny, for they're the meanest lot of white-livered lubbers that ever cut throats. Stove me for'ard! but I should ha' liked to a-seen you drubbing them."

"Yes! so that you could have taken pot shots at us, I daresay," replied I drily.

"Like as not, but after the turn-up was over, not afore! Gum! but it must ha' bin good to see," and he cackled again at the thought. "However, you know what I am. I was fust mate of the 'Wauhoo' when she was afloat, I was, an' it warn't

no landlubber of you all but the bitterest devil this side of Davy Jones that smashed the bone in that leg. An' I swear to you that I can make it worth a good deal more to you to dock me for repairs and turn me out sound and ship-shape again, than to hang me up with the King's Jewellery on to make the country round look pretty. I can!"

"How?"

"Ah! that's it. Now you give me your solemn word o' promise that I'm to be first set to rights and then allowed to go free till I find a ship and get clean away, an' I'll pitch you a yarn that'll make you jump."

"But how do I know that your tale will be worth it, or whether it's true when you've told it?"

"Will it be worth it if it saves the whole lot of you from having your throats cut some night?" demanded he.

"There are not enough pirates unhung to do that," retorted I.

"Ain't there? Well, that's as may be: you'll see when the time comes. As for its being true, don't forget it was Dew did that," touching his bloody bandage as he spoke.

Pondering the matter for a minute or so, I re-

solved to close with the offer, remembering that the fellow would still be in our power if he played us false.

"Very well, mate," said I, gracing him with his title. "I'll make a bargain with you. You give me information that is of value to me and I'll give you my word that you shall get off cured and cleared. Now?"

"Your hand on it!"

"My hand on it," suiting the action to the word.

"Then this here's it. Dew and the rest are gone to Bristol City to fit out the ship again and fill her with every blessed seaman in the place that ever cut a throat under the Jolly Roger. Then they're a-coming here to let daylight through every mother's son of you — aye, and they'll do a deal worse than that by those same mothers and all the rest of the women folk."

"When?" I asked.

"They left here four days agone. They should be somewhere pretty close by this time."

"That is the truth?"

"True as Gospel."

No doubt the villain expected me to be astonished at this. At any rate his jaw fell when, after

a minute's silence, I cried out, "I am glad you say so. I knew it all along."

It was his turn to doubt. "How did you know, young tar heel? Who told you?"

"No one. You need not fear my breaking my promise. I'll keep that. What I mean is that I all along believed we hadn't done with the pirates yet."

He looked much relieved. "That you have not, young gentleman. Old Dew will come back — make no mistake about that. He'll always do more for revenge than he will for the good gold. Why, he steered the 'Wauhoo' slap into Port-au-Prince one night, and took a boat's crew ashore to cut the throat of a high an' mighty there that had got in his way some time or another. Mind you, he had to pay us handsome for that — our rules not allowing of such jobs. He'll come, will Dew. Never fear."

"But how comes it that you are lying here? You were mate of the 'Wauhoo,' you say, and yet you tell me Dew did this."

"Well, sonny, mebbe you believe what I've told you. Mebbe you don't. Anyhow, you'll believe easier when I've explained all about this thing, and somehow I feel as if I'd like to run it over once

about me and Dew. But first do you give me another pull at that flask o' yourn: it's a longish yarn and I don't feel any too clever for it."

CHAPTER XII.

TELLING HOW POLWITHY KEPT FAITH.

First I bunched up the heather again to prop him higher and more comfortable, and then, handing him the flask, had the doubtful pleasure of hearing the last drop of its contents gurgle down his gullet.

"Ah, that's something like stuff: that never paid duty, I'll warrant. Shouldn't wonder but that old shell-back a-steerin' your skiff the other day steered that flaskful ashore too. Now about Dew. We calls him old Dew; though I'll lay he's pretty nigh the youngest of us all, leastwise I don' reckon he's much over thirty, an' he's been Cap'n of the 'Wauhoo' nigh on to three years now.

"When I joined her old Bluewitt was Cap'n; Dew, he was mate, an' I was bo'sun. Me an' Dew never did hit it off together, an' the longer we know'd each other, the more stand off we got. Not open like, because old Bluewitt would have cut our two throats in turn, as it came our watch

below, if he thought we'd be likely to divide the crew. An' quite right, too. Now Dew's a smart sailor and always was, an' he'd chase the biggest ship that ever sailed, or any two of 'em for the matter of that, if he thought it was worth while. But he has a high an' mighty notion of hisself, as if he was a blessed British admiral and we a lot o' pressed men; an' that doesn't go down with gentlemen of our kidney.

"Anyhow we fell of a day when old Bluewitt laid us alongside of a King's Ship by mistake, an' when a broadside swept him overboard in different sized messes, Dew took hold and brought us off; mauled of course, but still good enough for business another day. It was smartly done, I won't deny, and naturally he comes out as Captain — me to be mate, not because he liked me, but because the crew did, an' so he concluded to let it be so.

"Now Dew, he's a pirate, but he's the son of a pirate too! Ulloth was his father; the stiffest man that ever harried a Spanish town, if all be true that's told of him.

"This Ulloth would be a gentleman and come to live in England as such — an' I reckon that's because he was a half-breed and born somewhere

under the line. Contrary! — But when he gets into this channel out here he gets wrecked on an island full of pirates and everybody drowned but he, that was pulled ashore by the Cap'n o' this island. There he heard about a cave full of gold and jewels, though they wouldn't let him see it. Then he makes love to this Cap'n's daughter and runs off with the girl, thinking that he'll torture her and make her confess just where the cave was."

"I know," interrupted I. "This was the island and she stole the Jewel."

"Ha! so that was true, then? Mebbe you can tally the rest. Well! Ulloth, he found he'd laid the wrong ship aboard, for the first move he made with the girl she floored him with the pistol from his own belt, an' when he whipped out his cutlass she wheezed a ball through him. I reckon she was a clipper, she was. Then she slipped away and Ulloth never seen any more of her. After that he gathers a crew and starts back for this island, an' that's the last the West Indies heard of him.

"It appears their son growed up to be my Cap'n — Dew hisself — and his mother had persuaded him to some yarn about being King of this 'ere

blasted island, along o' the Jewel she stole. An' that's what made him so stuck up! But it appears she told him about this cave full of gold, too, an' that it couldn't be handled till some one with the Jewel came to haul it out — an' he believed the whole blessed yarn; every word! an' that's what brought us here! You see we made a mint o' money after he got Cap'n: I don't deny he's as smart a man as ever fought a ship; but atop o' that he ups and swears we are all to go to England an' settle down to be lords, every man of us. That's what his father said afore him — I reckon it runs in the blood, an' he's the stubbornest man that ever made up his mind.

"Now I reckon we did have a rare old time when first we comes to Bristol. We was drunk from one day to another, an' I've seen us lift a keg o' rum and turn the spigot into our throats till we was speechless. But not Dew; he sets out to claim this kingdom o' his. It appears he found it — this is it," with a motion of the hand to indicate the island.

"I reckon he didn't find any people to be king over, but he heard of something a long lay finer. He heard that his father had cleaned out and murdered the son's subjects, but yet missed the treas-

ure, which was reckoned to be here somewhere still."

"And that is true also!" interpolated I.

"Ha! is it? He said it was; though most of us didn't believe it. But he'd lost the Jewel, and so he reckoned he'd have to find that fust. He tried to persuade us, too, that if we found the Jewel again he could claim the island and the treasure in court of law, since he would be the owner and lord of the island then. You know best how they went on when the four of them landed to look for the Jewel that day. Well, after that we makes him give up the hunting for the Jack, and tells him we'll take the risk of owning this treasure if once we finds it. He was mad at that, but he pretends to give in, an' so easy too, that I might ha' knowed he was only waiting — Dew never gives in on one tack without he's made up his mind to win on some other. Then we lands here and sets to hunting up this treasure, an' I tell you now there ain't no such thing aboard this blessed rat-hole, for we've dug up the floor of every cave in it, an' all we ever found was rotten keg staves an' such like.

"Then that day you dropped on us, an' I reckon no seamen was ever done so neatly.

Though if that fool Dickson hadn't wet the priming of the gun we'd ha' had you when first you showed round the Jaws. Mebbe you thought we was all drowned, but we was no landlubbers; we backed her off, though she had two or three holes in her that looked like Davy Jones a-squintin' through. We stuck jackets in them and put back here, bailing all the way. That sickened the whole of us, though, an' I swore, dead on, that I'd stand no more such foolin', an' the rest they swore the same.

"Well, now, Dew, he only smiled and said 'All right, an' we'd better patch up and get back to Bristol at once.'

"I didn't like to see him fall in so smooth, an' I took good care to speak him fair and soft and be spry about my duties. Then there was four days we was patchin' up the boat an' pickin' your blessed bird shot out o' one another, an' drinkin' the last o' the rum, all 'cept one bottle Dew saved. Then we was ready to sail.

"When we thought we was all aboard, Dew says quiet-like to me, 'Polwithy, we're one man short. You'll find Dickson up there in the house: I reckon he stole the bottle o' rum. Fetch him down out o' that!' Now Dickson was always

the drunkest of the lot by reason of his bein' soft and his head not standin' the rum. Well, I comes up and finds Dickson and he stands and jaws at me, an' just as I was goin' to lay hands on him an' haul him down I hears a noise behind me an' turns to find Dew, in the doorway there, with a brace of cocked pistols in his hands lining me. Afore I could move he drops me — there, where that bandage is, both balls — an' as I goes down he jumps over an' snatches away my pistols an' cutlass.

"Seeing that, Dickson struck in for me, but instead of a pistol he only flings the pannikin o' rum at Dew's head — being a natural fool an' soft — an' before he had time to follow that up Dew whips a brace of balls through him — an' that's him over there! Then turning to me as quiet as a gentleman, 'Now you lie there, Polwithy,' says the Cap'n, 'till my relations from Pwllwen come over an' give you a rise in the world at the end of a rope. I don't allow any man to stand in my way when I've set to do a thing. I'll give them time to find you and then I'll turn up in the "Wauhoo" and cut every throat, within three miles of Pwllwen, till I find the Jewel again.'

"An' that's four days ago, sonny," concluded Polwithy.

"But how have you managed since?" queried I eagerly.

"Oh! I lived very cheap, sonny, since then. Wittles an' drink together cost me nothin'" — he grinned horribly as he said it — "there was Dickson's bottle — which I reckon Dew gave him on purpose — wasn't empty yet, an' there was some water in that pannikin an' a couple o' biscuits in my pocket. An' here I've laid ever since with the pistols I took from Dickson's belt — which I reckon Dew didn't think of. I'm mighty glad I missed you too, sir, stove me for'ard if I ain't! since, don't you see, I'm to be nussed according to your promise, whereas if I'd hit you, either your people would have come over to look for you and found me, or else Dew would ha' come back, and I know what that 'ud ha' meant."

"Speakin' o' that too, we ain't got no time to lose, so if your boat's handy we'd better warp out o' this an' stand out for sea room."

His eagerness showed how much he dreaded the return of his old captain, and forced me to believe his story. Moreover, I pitied him in that he had lain through so much misery in those four

days with that corpse beside him; it must have been an awful time. And then on top of that I had stricken him so stoutly, though of course unaware of his condition. I felt very sorry as I thought of it, and therefore I spoke at once.

"Just wait till I go and clear the skiff to make room for you, if you can bear the moving?"

"No tricks now, sonny; no slipping your cable and leaving me here for Dew. Remember your promise."

"I am a gentleman," retorted I stiffly.

"Ah! an' I'm one too, but not your sort. I've kept my word, though."

"And I'll keep mine!"

"Aye! but just help me out o' this hole that's as foul as a Spanish lazareet. Let me lie in the sun an' the wind while you are making snug: mebbe I can look on an' give you a hint or two. Won't you?"

That touched me, for I have ever loved the free air and the bonny sunlight, and so, without another word, I stooped and helped him up on to the one sound limb. The pain made him swear and curse fit to raise one's hair, there being now no longer need for silence as when he crawled for the musket. Therefore he pitched a full note of it.

"I ain't no sermon-snuffler at the best o' times, an' that's a fact; but this leg does hurt me, an', by the way she hangs in stays when I wear ship, I reckon she'll have to be fitted with a new spar — a timber toe, by gum!"

I thought so too, but I did not say anything: I was busy helping him along. "Good-bye, Dickson," he growled, as we passed into the kitchen. "You see," he went on to me, apologetically, "I've talked to him so long while we've been lying there broadside on to one another, him listening soothing-like, with his dead ears, when I swore to ease my pain — that it sorter seems like leaving a living messmate; an' after all it wasn't his fault he was soft. Dew gave him the rum."

When we reached the outer doorway he leaned against the charred door-post and expanded his chest with a deep breath while he rolled out a string of fantastic blasphemy in pure delight of seeing the day once more. He was a very fascinating villain to me, having no more conscience than a mad dog, and somehow I felt that I had not done with him yet.

When we reached the edge of the rock overhanging the water, I let him lie where he could watch me as I descended to dress the skiff for his

reception. This was soon done, and I proposed to assist him down the steps.

"None o' your steps for me, sonny, with this leg. You pass me a line up here; I see you've got one handy. Make it fast to the doorway behind and carry it round your mast thwart. Then you put out a little and down her anchor to stay her against my weight, and just keep her stern on to me while I come down, hand under hand, as gently as the Jolly Roger when we goes into Port Royal for honest seamen. So! belay there, an' stand by to receive cargo!"

By this time I had followed his instructions and now watched him seize the line and swing himself over. He did not come down hand under, being, as I suppose, too weak, but he came down on his stomach and growling every foot he gained, by reason of the pain in his leg.

When he was safely aboard he tumbled to the tiller. "I'll steer, sonny. You lay the course an' I'll keep it. I want to get outside o' this, for I'm afeared an' shaking in my bones lest every minute I see Dew a-coming through that blessed bottle neck of an entrance there. Let's get under way. Ah! but I forgot, there's that musket o' yourn that you did us such damage with. Like enough

we'll want it again if we meet Dew outside. Just run up and fetch it. Lively now."

I dreamed no harm of this, and moreover, I was loth to lose the gun that had stood me in such stead. Therefore I set to fetch it, and accordingly started hand over hand up the line he came down. Barely was I half-way before I heard a horrible chuckle in the boat. Instantly I remembered the hatchet under the seat and, looking back, was horrified to see Polwithy, with a vicious pant, bring down the keen edge upon the straining line. I had not time to loose my hold ere the rope parted and I was dashed so forcibly against the rock as to partly stun me.

I scarcely remember a time when I could not swim, and it was second nature to me to strike out, even dazed as I was. But the cool of the water revived me almost at once, and my wits gathered just in time to allow me thoroughly to comprehend the meaning of that ferocious face and gleaming hatchet in the skiff, towards which I was heading feebly. Turning again, I made for the steps, and instantly upon reaching them dashed to the top.

Glancing back, I saw the villain had already cut the anchor rope and was bringing the skiff's head

POLWITHY CUTS THE ROPE

round to the wind. Spurred by the sight, which roused me to fullest anger, I rushed into the house and seized the musket. Darting back I raised it to my shoulder and, taking good aim, shouted in my wrath, "Now! you thundering villain!" and pulled the trigger. But there was no report; not even a flash in the pan, for the fall had jarred the priming out, and in my rage I had forgotten to renew it.

"Ho! ho! young skipjack," shouted the pirate in derision. "You are a fine gentleman now, no doubt! but you'll be a finer one when Dew comes and finds you trespassing on his blasted kingdom."

Stung to madness by his taunts, pricked, too, by the fear of what he said concerning my fate should Dew find me on the island, I bethought me of my powder horn. There must surely be some dry powder in it in spite of my ducking, for it was one Will Barry had made for me himself.

"I've got you," I shouted back in ferocious joy, being now no more like a Christian than the pirate himself, so deeply had his treachery and my mortification worked. Turning, I sprang away at my fleetest pace to gain the edge of the cliff overhanging the last bend in the neck. My wind was

good in those days, but yet I had barely time to reach the spot ere the skiff was passing beneath. I had shaken out two-thirds of the powder as I ran, and now, as I threw myself down at full length, I dashed a choking priming into the pan. The fellow was right beneath me, although perhaps sixty feet down.

"You had your shot: this is mine!" I shouted. Startled at my voice, he looked up and through the sights of my weapon I saw his horrible visage pale as I pulled the trigger. He seemed to be seized with a notion of leaping overboard, but the charge took him full in the back of the neck as he bent and he fell all of a heap, dead, on the gunwale, bringing it dangerously near to the water's edge, while the skiff fell away until she bumped idly against the face of the cliff on whose top I lay.

Then a trembling came over me, for though I had fired into the boat the other day, yet this was the first time I had seen plainly the result of my handiwork. I felt a rush of horror, such as I could not before have believed in. Not even the remembrance of his treachery could avail to stay the first sharp pang of my remorse, and just then I honestly believed that no length of years could

ever blot out from my mind the grey pallor that made his features so hideous when I pulled the trigger. And to this day the picture of Polwithy's death stands out as clearly almost as even the bloody horrors I was so soon to witness and take part in.

CHAPTER XIII.

ENDING WITH SOME PREPARATIONS FOR DEFENCE.

It was the remembrance of Dew's present intentions that roused me at length and sent me back to the stairhead in the harbour.

My clothing being so wet, I did not trouble to strip beyond my coat and shoes; but, first finding and belting on the knife I had wrested from the pirate in the inner room, I plunged in and struck for the neck. I took the knife because even yet I could not feel sure that the pirate was dead enough to be unable to swing one other blow of the hatchet, so strong an impression had his devilish determination and his pertinacity of life through all the pain of his waiting wrought upon me.

But the precaution was needless, for when I reached the skiff the body was still huddled where it had fallen. Stroking ahead, I clambered aboard over the bows, and the first thing I did was to heave his body overboard. Not till the black and inky deeps had closed above him did I feel sure of

him, and then with a sigh of relief, sorrow and satisfaction strangely mingled, I set to pull back to the harbour steps.

Donning my coat and shoes again and reloading my musket with the last of my powder, fortunately dry enough, as I proved by flashing some in the pan, I stepped into the skiff once more and started for the neck and the open sea. Once outside, with the cheery sun dancing on the twinkling waters and the sweet breeze playing upon my cheek, the horror that had settled upon me in the charnel place of Treforgan seemed to lighten and disappear. My spirits rose with every length I left it behind, and at length I — grew hungry. First tossing my flask overboard in sheer disgust of the lips that last had touched it, I took the half loaf and piece of cheese from the little forward locker, together with the flagon of sack reposing beside it, and thereupon, in spite of what had happened in the last hour, made a very decent meal indeed.

With the eating and the drinking my spirits rose to such an extent that I was soon ready to think most valiantly in respect of my own deserts, and even to maintain to my conscience that I had done a righteous deed in ridding the world of

so foul a wretch — the man who would have left me to be butchered by Dew after failing in the same design himself. Then I fell to wondering if Polwithy's tale were true. Even as the doubt appeared I scouted it; whatever the man himself might be, his tale was too sound not to be true, and, moreover, I believed that at the time he told it he was really hoping to keep me to my promise of securing, first his return to health and afterwards his escape. It was only the new hopes born of the sunshine, the free air and the trim skiff, which bred the treachery of cutting me loose into the harbour. It is to be supposed that he then intended to sail back to Bristol, and take his chance there in some low haunt where such as he might count on security and friends.

That brought the terror of Dew up again, and you may be very sure that I kept a bright look-out all the way over, steering in the strength of the current in order to get every wash of speed possible out of the skiff. Slipping along at a great rate, I soon rounded the point of Trwynhir, feeling a huge swell of relief at seeing before me the dim haze of smoke and glint of whitewashed cottages which told that as yet, at least, Pwllwen had not been harried by the dreaded Dew.

Dick Shon was still upon the beach and standing by to lend a hand as the skiff ran lightly ashore.

"Has Morris got back with the lugger yet?" I demanded at once, though feeling sure beforehand of his answer.

"Not yet, but I expect him to-night or to-morrow if all goes well. But Och! Ivor boy! what is the matter? Your hat and sword are gone, your coat is torn and there is blood in the boat — has any harm happened you, son Ivor?" There was genuine warmth in his tone.

"Well, I found a pirate in Treforgan and he tried to kill me and steal the boat. I shot him — that is all. But this I will tell you for truth, Dick Shon, the pirates were not drowned at all. They got clear off, and now they have gone back to get their ship and more murderers and come and cut the throats of every soul in Pwllwen."

"Ah now! Dear King! but that's very pretty of them. Still if they do not get here before the lugger, I do think 'twill be other throats than they reckon will be to be cut. I even feel very easy as it is, for I will pass the word at once and there will be enough of us to take a hand in the cutting perhaps, without waiting for the lugger. Diaoul! Yes!"

"Right. I think so too. And now I'll get up home and tell my father. We have men enough at Dolgoch to tackle a good many pirates."

"And never a one of them at Dolgoch better than yourself, Ivor boy. It is a rare man you are grown since you came from school," replied he, with true approval in his tone.

I laughed at that, but I was pleased too, and all the way to the Black Lion I swelled my chest with pride. It was no light thing to have won such words from one who usually was grimmer, if possible, than old Las himself. Taking the dun nag from Tom Ostler, who was watering him, I jumped upon his bare back and drummed him with my heels into a flying gallop over the bridge and up the avenue, as I had often done for sport aforetimes. This time it was to speed my news, and even his pace — a very decent one that was too — could not allay my sudden impatience. Which is the way of a boy a-horseback.

I found my father engaged in a game of bowls with Doctor David on the lawn in front of the house, Will Barry and the parson sitting under the great oak looking on.

"Hulloa, sir!" cried my father, seeing my unseemly haste. "Is that the way a gentleman

comes before his father? But what is the matter?" for as I leaped down he, like Dick Shon, noticed my disordered appearance.

"The pirates, sir!" said I, with as much deference as I could assume upon the instant. "One shot at me and tore my coat, and after that cut the rope and dropped me in the water, where I lost my hat."

"Diaoul! were you hanging? committing suicide? And did he cut the rope with your own sword, sir!"

"Nay, sir! for shame, sir!" interposed the old doctor. "The lad has a tale to tell, I warrant. And touching the sword, I think he would not lose that to a pirate any easier than his father would. Be just, sir."

To have another praise his son was right pleasing to my father, and his assumed sternness fell at once into a gracious aspect.

"Let us hear the story, son; it must be worth hearkening to come at such speed. But first are you hurt, Ivor?"

"Not hurt, sir, only a scratch!" and forthwith I fell to recounting the day's adventures. I laid great stress upon Polwithy's ingratitude, in order to excuse as far as possible the killing of him.

Not that there proved to be any occasion for this, since my father exploded like a powder magazine as he heard of the fellow's dastardly attempt to drown me, while the doctor swore openly and learnedly and the parson protested emphatically upon the point. As for my foster-brother, he showed his teeth in a dry grin that was very suggestive to me, who knew the thoughts of his heart.

"Shoot him!" ejaculated my father. "It is a pity, certainly, that you killed him. You should have brought him home alive, and I would have thrown him to the kennels for the dogs to worry. Diaoul!"

"And your wound," cried the doctor. "Let me see that at once!"

"Oh, that was only Polwithy practising phlebotomy. Not carrying a lance, he used a pistol," protested I slyly.

"Young gentleman," quoth the doctor severely, "if the loss of blood from this wound should bring on a fever, you will be glad enough to have me cure that by practising another touch of phlebotomy — which will be on the principle of 'like cures like.' I will not quote it in the learned language, since I think from my conversation

with you that it was not studied at the school which you attended."

The doctor having fetched off so pretty a victory in this encounter of our wits, I was fain to submit and doff my coat and vest for the preliminary glance of the kindly old Medico.

"Ah! not serious; not serious; but painful, no doubt. Come inside and I will apply an ointment; a salve that shall soothe it at once. Come inside."

By the time that it was dressed it was drawing nigh to the hour for dining, and I, turning to seek a change of clothing, found that the tailor, after long waiting for materials to come by packhorse from the coach town, had finished my new apparel. This, while not so gay or so well abreast of the mode as that of the gallants I had been wont to envy in England, was yet of such goodly texture and appearance as to make a very brave show upon my person. There were new ruffles to my shirt at bosom and wrist, buckles of the brightest to my shoes, and a small sword of most elegant proportions wherewith to cock my coat-skirt at a ferocious angle — which trick of show, made with so finikin a weapon, is, as I do opine, part of its nature, being imported from the French, and like

enough, therefore, to fetch with it their braggadocio manners.

Then I sought Will Barry in his room, as I had ever been wont, upon each new advantage gained, to have his approval and delighted comments upon my appearance, since my fineries would have yielded me scant pleasure for all their brave aspect, had they not pleased him too — as is the manner betwixt friends.

He himself had donned his best small clothes, with a silk flowered vest and a new coat of blue which became him manly well as he stood firm and straight once more after his wound.

Over the dinner my father allowed me to see that he was very well pleased with my day's doings, I growing so proud at that that my waistcoat was none too big for me at all. The parson, too, beamed at me across the table, and was very lenient in regard to my educational shortcomings. In the English of his college days, then half a century past, he opined, that though it had, perhaps, been more conducive to an inward satisfaction had I proceeded to Oxford and there taken a degree, yet he doubted if that scholar, whose learning I had so rudely settled in his jacket, would have borne himself with such credit in the

matter of these pirates. Wherefore he purposed to write to Doctor Deeply, upon some near occasion, informing him of my carriage and quittance in this affair, whereby he hoped in some measure to restore me to the good graces of that most learned man.

Whereat I laughed boisterously as I pictured an encounter betwixt Master Simon Slimjeans and Polwithy, even if aided by the birch rod of the college head himself. Even the doctor grinned slyly, and my father applied himself to the tasting of a newly-opened bottle as an excuse for sundry grimaces, which might have been the spectres of murdered smiles. Will Barry, as having neither knowledge or comprehension of men not constitutionally brave, only smiled broadly in sympathy.

I had need be happy in those days when every man I knew was proud of me from one end of the place to the other, and if I thought on my road home from school that I was a man, I was ready to swear to it that night.

My father even allowed me to keep my seat over the wine, though in truth he kept my glass at his elbow and filled it but sparingly — a thing which was, perhaps, most wise.

When the time came to separate for the night

I asked for, and obtained, permission to sleep down at the Black Lion, while Will Barry proclaimed his intention of accompanying me, since, as he told my father in extenuation, he should not be able to move quick enough to reach the village in time, should Dew attack it while he himself was at Dolgoch. The reference to his weakness took my father in the right spot, so that he gave us his consent in a very gracious manner, only stipulating that the little stable lad should ride up on the first note of danger and carry the news.

Therefore my foster-brother and I, changing our finery for more sober suits, forwarded our long muskets by the hands of Pryce Aubrey, and thereafter, he leaning on my arm, sauntered slowly down the avenue. My foppery French sword I had replaced by a downright hewer and cutter from Will's bedhead, his second best in fact, leaving his long idol to streak the dusk alone, its wielder being still too weak to swing it. As he went he explained that if the attack was made he should sit in a chair at his bedroom window and pot pirates at his leisure. He could reach the beach easily with his especial musket, which was a present my father had brought back upon his return from the Bath nearly a year ago. I myself have

ever loved a good weapon, but my foster-brother was a rank pagan in respect, first of a sword, and after that of anything which savoured of an honest affray.

Proud men may have gone over that bridge before my day, but I do not think a prouder one ever crossed its crown than I was that night. My hat had a strong rake aft, and as I went I smote the great scabbard by my leg with the cane in my left hand, and we two talked of slaughter, or rather I pictured the deeds I would do, and he criticised my limnings.

Inside the Black Lion we found only Evan Landlord, Dick Shon and Pryce Aubrey, all the men of the village being gone to bed, not in scorn of my warning, but because it was past their usual hour for retiring and, said they, they could fight all the better fresh than weary if Dew should come. Dick Shon was to act as lookout, or what he called anchor watch, and Evan Landlord was to leave a drop of something in the kitchen, with the door upon the latch only, so that the watch might punctuate the hours in sensible fashion — at least that was what Dick Shon said in explanation. Will decided that Pryce Aubrey was to sleep in the dining-room, on the other side of the

passage which divided the house, Tom Ostler and Jenkin Potman were both to sleep in the room we were now sitting in, while he and I were to occupy the two front bedrooms, he the one nearest the beach, and I nearest the bridge. He did not order Evan Landlord to sleep anywhere in particular, since that jovial soul had a wife somewhere on the premises, and no man can obey two masters, as we know. Then we went up-stairs.

Of course I went into his room with him to see what I could do to assist him in his present weakness, who had waited upon me hand and foot from my childhood up. I was as fussy as a housewife. I felt the sheets to determine if they were damp, and did not mind when he met my phrase of doubt as to their airedness — caught from his own mother, mind you — with a laugh as strong as he dared compass by reason of his ribs being still tender. Then, seeing that I was going to run through the whole round of the suspicions usual with his mother in such a case, he stopped me with a snort, and bade me assist him off with his coat.

Then I was to drag the table close to the window and set the chair beside it in the right position to give a clear sweep down to the beach. Next

I was to carefully load the musket and place it upon the table, with the bandoleers ranged ready to hand, all as orderly and precise as if he had been a soldier and this a fort. When this was accomplished to his satisfaction I turned for further orders, and saw that his eye had been taken by the sight of a blunderbuss upon the wall.

It was a peculiar weapon, of foreign make as I judged, for from its muzzle to its shoulder-plate it was of brass entirely. The butt must have been hollow, or it would have been impossible for a man to have used it; as it was, I should not have cared to shoulder it. But Will discerned great value in it. "Look at the gape of that muzzle," he cried approvingly; "it will take a whole parcel of bullets at once. See!" and deftly cutting off a corner of his kerchief, he tied up six or seven small pistol-balls and fitted them into the barrel. His enthusiasm rose still higher at that, and he immediately proceeded to flash a priming in the pan, holding the muzzle up the chimney for safety the while, in order to make sure it was unloaded. Then he set to and loaded it himself, using a stiff charge of powder and ramming home upon it what he called the "load of grape shot." Thereafter he primed it and laid it beside his musket, seeming quite taken

with its possibilities, as I remembered before morning. This done he bade me good-night, and I retired to my own room.

Of course I did not worry about the sheets in my own bed, since it was only I who was to sleep there, and I had all a boy's scorn of what I considered effeminacy in such matters. Instead I went to work to set out my armament as Will had his, hanging my sword at the bedhead, placing my pistols under the pillow, and laying musket and bandoleers upon the table by the window. Looking out of the said window, I noted afresh the peculiarity of the village. You must know that the little stream coming from the westward, is met upon its passing under the bridge by another from the eastward, and together they eddy along a deep pool in a right line towards the sea, where a ridge of shingle cuts them off and only allows them to trickle out by small and devious rills to the ocean. The white sands in the pool give it its name, and its gentle depths from generation to generation had beguiled the village children into that skill of swimming for which they were famous. All the cottages faced this pool with their backs to the street, which ran in a parallel line from the bridge down to the beach. Therefore this side of the

street had nothing but the Black Lion and its out-buildings, barring one great barn at the tail of the bridge above. Each cottage was built separate from its neighbour, having two rooms, with a door and two windows facing the pool; being, in fact, small copies of the houses of Treforgan. But since the destruction of that town a tiny loophole, scantly twelve inches in breadth, had been pierced in the rear wall of each habitation, looking into the street behind, so that for all the world you could think of nothing but the gun ports of a man-of-war as you glanced along the line. At the same time there had been built a row of four cottages at right angles betwixt the pool and the street, having their loopholed backs to the sea, and thus blocking up that end of the village. If only they could have been persuaded to wall up the gaps betwixt the cottage corners along the street, the place would have been impregnable to any dash of pirates.

Of course all this was not visible to me in the darkness, but I conjured it up in my mind's eye, and I have here been at such pains in describing it, that the reader may be at no loss in picturing what followed.

One small glimmer of light shone from the loophole of the cottage opposite, that of Dick Shon,

and I fell a-wondering how long a time it would be before that light would be extinguished forever, and the villagers gone to people once more the ruined town of their ancestors, making it again a nest of sea-rovers. Will Barry would be their leader, as had been settled long ago, and then what should I do alone here on the mainland?

The closing of the porthole roused me from my pondering, and I turned again to the bedside, where, after repeating the prayer I was wont to use at that hour, I doffed my coat and stretched along on top of the quilt, falling sound asleep in a moment.

CHAPTER XIV.

DETAILING THE BATTLE OF PWLLWEN.

In those days my sleep was usually so sound as to be dreamless, but this night was an exception. Once again I was going through the scene with Polwithy. First I heard the two pistol shots, and finally the bang of my own musket over the edge of the cliff. So vivid was the report of this last that I awoke with a start and sprang to the floor to listen.

It was no dream cheating my ears; the whole place was alive with the din of fighting, shouts, groans, oaths and curses, clash of steel and crash of firearms. Suddenly a sheet of blood-red light flared into the room, and leaping to the window I flung it open to gaze at the pandemonium below. Even as I did so I heard the bang of Will Barry's musket from the next window, and in the glare of the burning thatches I saw a tall villain spin round in the street, ere he pitched full length in the roadway, dead!

"What is it, Will?" I shouted.

"Pirates!" came the laconic answer, and I heard the ring of the ramrod as it thudded home a fresh charge.

No need for the answer; the scene itself made manifest the cause of the uproar. Betwixt us and the beach a full hundred of murderous-looking ruffians were surging along, busy with their hellish attempts at fulfilling Dew's threat of cutting every throat in Pwllwen. But a dear boast they found that was, for every cottage was a castle, with pistol or musket to blaze from its porthole windows, and a cutlass, half-pike, or axe, to deal swift death to the first who should cross the threshold of a bursten door. So fierce a reception had they met that they had fallen to another method, thrusting torches into the thatch eaves so as to smoke the defenders out or roast them to death in their own homes.

All this I took in at a glance, so vividly was it set forth, and in the same glance saw that half a dozen of the pirates were rushing towards the Black Lion, carrying torches of burning straw. No time to lose! quick as a flash I snatched my musket from the table and fired full at the body of the foremost ruffian. Instant with the pull he fell, and, as if that had been a signal to fire, from the

other windows of the house rang out a volley which tumbled four of the rest into the dust, for Tom Ostler and Jenkin Potman were both old poachers.

The main body of the pirates had noticed the destruction of their advanced party, and now they whipped up their muskets and fired a straggling volley at the house. I heard a sharp cry from the window immediately beneath me, and looking down saw the body of poor old Pryce Aubrey fall headlong out of it, and settle into a quivering heap on the cobble stones in front. The sight of that bleeding form, the grey hair streaked with crimson, that which an hour ago had been so kind and true a friend to me, filled me with a fury which even the burning thatches had not roused, and I could scarcely see to ring home the ramrod for the tears that rushed to my eyes. Yet I laughed too; the tears were more of rage than sorrow.

I heard the rush of feet outside; the pirates were coming on afresh. Ready again, I poured in my fire, but though I dropped my man, I saw him rise to his knee and whip up his musket to answer me. Yet I, mad and burning for revenge, noted with grim satisfaction that, though the other four defenders each brought down his man, the re-

mainder of their comrades never faltered. Then the fury drove me to a thing as reckless as well could be. Dropping my gun, I seized the sword and pistols from the bed, and venting a yell worthy of the devil I was become, put my foot upon the window-sill and leaped right out in front of the charging horde which surged at that instant up to the door.

Blindly I rushed at the nearest, a broad, black villain as ever went to hell, and, before he could shape to raise a guard, I smote him at the line of neck and shoulder and clove him a handbreadth down. As he fell the whole band turned to overwhelm me, and so throng they came that they had not space to swing their cutlasses, and neither could they point a pistol for the jostling. Well was it for me then that Will Barry had loaded the brass blunderbuss with grape, and that his aim was so true as he fired into the mass of heads below. Down went the stricken ones as when a rock crashes into the sapling pines, and while I raised a pistol and fired into them I heard those of Will and the rest cracking loose also. Then a dark mass from above leaped down, and my foster-brother, the red light from the burning roof-trees gleaming on his pale face, and the lightning of

battle flashing from his dark eyes, rushed past me with clubbed blunderbuss and fell upon the cursing crew.

With that the fierce joy of battle flared up in me, burning away all thoughts and feelings save the one overmastering desire for slaughter, and, with a kind of sob of ecstasy, I dashed in after my Paladin. I felt rather than knew that Evan Landlord and his two men had joined us, and I shouted again as I leaped like a wolf upon a giant negro and ran him through the throat till the hilt swished into the bubbling blood that let his life out into the night. Instant and by instinct I saw one on the left thrust at me with a cutlass, and while I parried with the empty pistol another rushed in and seized me. I laughed in derision at him who would close with a wrestler, and dropping the sword I set a lock on him and threw him.

But he could not fall to the ground at first for the press, till, as he hung half-way, the villain next him drew back to smite at me, and he went clutching down, while the hurly closed over him again and hid him from sight, to be found next morning, a shapeless mass of blood and broken bones.

As he disappeared it seemed that half a dozen brawny hands seized me and began to drag me

under the circling blades. But just as I was expecting sudden death I heard a roar of dry rage, and past me gleamed a weapon all horrible with grey brains and crimson with blood that dropped from it as it swung. It was the brass butt of the blunderbuss in Will Barry's hands, and, as it fell upon the nearest skull, smashed it to pulp.

Rousing myself I rose, just in time to catch the broadaxe as it fell from the grasp of Evan Landlord, where he went down beside me, his jugular vein torn wide from a musket-ball at arm's length range. I saw the musketeer, and even as his jaws wagged out an oath of self-credit I brought the broadaxe cleanly down upon his crown.

Through skull and face together the mighty edge hewed in, cutting in twain the foul tongue and cleaving asunder the wagging jaws, and he went down in bloody token of the good axe's weight, while I swung on to join my foster-brother, where he fought like the soul of battle incarnate. But as my leap from the window had brought the whole pirate crew upon us, so it had slacked the pressure upon the cottages, and their inmates took advantage of the shift-

ing of the hurly to escape, such of them as could.

But for two families this was all too late, and they lay still and the flesh upon their bones hissed and spluttered as the blaze enveloped them, while they died as the damned in perdition live, — by the flame.

Jenkin Potman was already gone under, and now Tom Ostler went down, shot in half a dozen places, and gaping from as many gashes of the steel, and we two were left alone with our backs to the house-front and our faces to the fiends in the street. Now, too, they seemed to see where their mistake had lain, and began to open out and prepare to shoot us down.

Dick Shon! Dick Shon! Ah! God be thanked for Dick Shon. Just now, when Death seemed reaching for us, I heard his voice cheering from the other side of the mob of our assailants, who turned with one accord to look behind them where a score of stubborn and vengeful men had fallen on their rear. Quick as they turned Will Barry leaped at them and I followed. The sweep of his weapon was like the very garner-stroke of Death itself, while the broadaxe in my hands shore asunder man and musket both, though I no longer

laughed or shouted at the deed. In the centre of the street we met the band of Dick Shon, pikes and cutlasses, with Owen Vawr, the smith, swinging the shear of a plough that laid a swath before him, wide as the tallest reaper ever made in the ripest corn. Only ten of them were standing, but we cheered to see them, and set up a fierce shout of defiance as we plunged afresh into the press of foes.

Yet if we were brave our enemies were stubborn, and now they gauged our numbers, and, taking fresh heart, charged us again with new hardihood, cursing us the while and yelling threats of vengeance. Step by step they bore us back, in spite of the terrible club that held Death in its reach, and in spite of the ploughshare that swept into Eternity whatever it smote. We had been twelve, we were now seven. The smith was down; Dick Shon went down; and there seemed nothing for it but selling our lives dearly.

Then from the bridge behind rung out a shout that brought up memories of a hundred fields. "Dolgoch! Dolgoch!" and I heard the rush of my father and his men.

"Dolgoch! Dolgoch!" we took up that hoar battle shout, like new life to us, and in another

THE BATTLE OF PWLLWEN

instant my father dashed through us, followed by a wedge of men, with Huw Trooper of them all to keep close to his elbow and pick off any foe who might be too pressing.

Back, backward then we bore the lately exulting villains, and over the cracking of pistols and the din of musketry rose the fierce yell of "Dolgoch! Dolgoch!" to be the death knell of the starkest scoundrels in their band.

But just when I thought all was won came the fiercest peril of the night. From over the bridge, even by the path of our succour, came a new rush, and I glanced over my shoulder in time to see Hopkyn Gam go under before the onslaught of a new body of pirates, led by Dew in person. My shout of warning came too late for Will Barry, and as I turned I stumbled wearily over the corpse at my feet, just in time to escape the pistol bullet of Dew, who, never pausing, rushed on to cut down my foster-brother.

He, sore pressed in front, turned too late to do more than avoid the cut by stooping, and ere he could lift again to swing his weapon, the empty pistol-barrel of the other fell with crushing force upon his head, stretching him senseless upon the bloody heap at his knee. Then once more I heard

a new shout; a new band appeared, and Morris Las charged in with the lugger's crew and scattered the weakened pirates like chaff.

It was the old doctor who dragged me out from under the tangle of dead and asked me earnestly where I was wounded; and it was the parson whose anxiety, as he bent over me, failed to see how needless was the lantern in his hand, in the midst of that woful light hemming in the street. Battered and breathless as I was, I staggered upright. "Nay, doctor, winded, not wounded," but the weary jest came nigh to choking me as I thought of my foster-brother. Kneeling beside him I lifted his head, not more bloody than his hands and clothing, and begged the doctor to look to him.

"Ah, poor Will!" I heard him say, and at that tribute of pity I believed at once my Paladin was dead, and stood upright again without waiting to hear more. My feet and hands seemed heavy as lead as I lurched away in the track of the brawling flight; the dull hate gnawing in my heart impelling me on, and my brain too sodden to even prompt me to pick up a weapon.

Upon the beach the pirates had been forced to turn to bay in order to gain time for the foremost

to launch their boats which the receding tide had left stranded. In the midst of the press I saw my father, attended by Huw Trooper, cutting and thrusting with a cool precision that afterwards astonished me when I came to think it over. I had always looked to see him fight in hot and headlong fury, but I recognised now that this was a far more deadly fashion of swording.

I felt a ferocious joy in watching each telling thrust, and smiled in unholy admiration when, with his left hand, he coolly set the ruffle of his shirt-bosom anew where it had become awry. His every movement dubbed him "gentleman," and I triumphed in the thought that I was his son

Then I caught a glimpse of a face I remembered, and pushing forward to my father's elbow, I cried in his ear:

"Dew! Dew! he killed Will Barry! Yonder, sir!" not calling him "father," since he was now in so punctilious a mood — as was plain to be noted in each trick of fence and turn of wrist.

For an instant the news stung him out of his calm. "Diaoul!" Then he smiled grimly as he pistolled the pirate in front, to gain time for a proper resumption of his guard and worship.

But now one of the boats was afloat. Instantly

as many of the villains as could leaped into her and pushed off, leaving the last half dozen to perish on the shingle in a vain attempt at defence.

"To the boats, lads. After them, and lay their ship aboard!" yelled old Morris, pointing to where, not three cables' lengths away, the weird outlines of a ship, hove to, glowed ghostly with the reflection of the dying conflagration behind us. So quickly was the order obeyed that Las himself had scantly time to leap aboard ere the long boat had pushed off and was pulling with mighty sweeps to reach the ship. I had tumbled in the instant the cry was given, and now as we tore on I fixed a hungry gaze upon the vessel which, as I thought, held the man I longed to see slain. To our surprise, however, there was no attempt to repel us as we swarmed over her rail, and on all the deck was only one fantastic figure, standing beside the helm, with a hideous face shining like a gnome's in the gleam of the binnacle light. Into the empty fo'c'sle rushed half our party, while Las and the rest dashed aft for the steersman. As we came into the rays of the single lantern hung in the after stays, the figure before us set up a shrill cry of astonishment and, loosing his grasp, dived down the companion to the cabin below.

It was Rwst Clanna, who, being fleetest, was the first to reach the stair and dive after the gnome. Old Morris, following hard after, had barely got half-way down ere, with an oath of fiercest wrath, he tore back to the deck, followed close by what seemed a moving pillar of fire, whence emanated appalling shrieks of agony. Sharp as it reached the top old Morris seized it by the middle and tossed it overboard, immediately after collaring the nearest man and shouting in his ear, "That is Clanna! Over with you and take him to the boat. Lively now!"

Quick was the word as the rescuer went over, and at once we heard him sing out, "Easy, all; Rwst, I'll take you round to the boat."

Meanwhile the rest of us hesitated at this mysterious danger. I was trying to push through, but old Las pulled me back. "That devil thing smashed one lamp over Clanna's head and slung the other through a port in the bulkhead — that's the way to the powder magazine. Give me a gun, somebody."

Seizing a proffered musket, he stole warily down again, I close at his heels, nearly choking, for the smoke was beginning to rise thickly. As we reached the lower steps we could just discern

through the burning the grotesque figure of the pirate, crouched in the far corner of the cabin as if ready to spring. He held a pistol in each hand, but, as he stretched them to shoot, a red tongue of flame caught the pans, and the bullets splintered harmlessly above us. With a shrill jabbering he flung the empty weapons at us, and then, drawing a long knife and stooping his bald pinnacle of a skull before him, made a fierce rush at us through smoke and flame and all. Steady stood old Las, with the musket at his hip, until that hideous head was almost touching the muzzle. Then with the report, as he pulled the trigger, the head disappeared while the body fell along with a grisly furrow opening the whole length of its back.

"Back to the boats again!" shouted our leader, "the fire will be into the magazine in a minute. Back!"

Up we went, pell-mell, yelling the warning to those in the fo'c'sle as we scrambled over and dropped into the boat. The instant we were all aboard we shoved off, pulling with might and main to get well clear of the burning ship, whose masts and rigging had now caught. Higher and higher lifted the flames, flickering first in coltish glee up

the surface of each sail, and twinkling up stay and shroud until they gathered strength and volume and the whole ship was one roaring mass of fire.

"Pull, lads! Pull!" shouted old Morris in new energy. "Get to the beach or she will blow us out of the water when she goes." No need to repeat that order; the danger was plain to every man, and the rowers bent to it till I thought they would drive the bow under. Hardly had we grated her upon the shingle and scrambled out and away, ere the whole world seemed to resound with a mighty crash, and the red flame of the ship became a lurid flash, in which we saw fragments flying in every direction. Then followed total extinction, and all the sea was dark again, save where, at scattered intervals, flickered a rail or a timber still feebly burning, and ere the echoes had ceased to roll along the hills the catastrophe was accomplished: the "Wauhoo" was gone.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH I COME TO NO SMALL HONOUR.

When the last man on the beach was fallen, my father had taken boat to follow us. His crew, however, had seen our hurried retreat and put back in time for him to be landed and waiting to receive us.

"Well, men," he cried, as soon as the explosion was over, "that fray was as well foughten as ever a fray was. But we must attend to the wounded now. God help you! Gentlemen all." His voice shook a little with the last words: he could see how every man seemed to lose his stubborn carriage at the mention of the wounded, and knew that each one would find both dead and hurt amongst his people, since we were all akin. Feverish haste usurped the place of defiant eagerness as we set about our doleful errand.

I myself had not taken two strides before I felt my father's arm about my shoulder, supporting my dragging steps. I knew the sympathy which

prompted that pressure, but the only words he spoke were an inquiry as to whether I was hurt or no. "No, father; it is Will!" answered I.

We kept straight on till we reached the spot where my foster-brother had fallen. He was lying at full length on his back, his head pillowed upon a corpse, and it was curious that the first thing I noticed was his shirt-front being torn away and the Jewel gone. Then the tears began to swim in my eyes, and down I knelt beside him, weeping outright, and caring nothing for my new manhood or who might be watching me.

A kindly touch upon my shoulder roused me. It was the doctor, who, seeing my grief, had interrupted his task of attending the wounded long enough to step over and comfort me. "Nay, nay, Ivor! not slain; not slain; only stunned. Get him carried inside somewhere and send for his mother to nurse him."

"Thank God!" It was my father whose voice was so emphatic, and I remembered that he too loved my foster-brother. And, as if for token of it, he took the prone man by the armpits, while I raised his lower limbs, and together we bore him to his bedroom at the Black Lion. There was no need to send for his mother, though. For all the

parson's fostering, the blood in her veins was pirate blood, and, prompt at the first alarm, she had roused the maids and bidden them follow her to carry the wounded out of the fight and bind them up and tend them. Yet her courage faltered when I told her that her son was hurt, and she suffered me without opposition to support her to his bedside. Then, as if the unconscious brain had known her coming, the life came back to him in a long fluttering sigh, and the deep eyes opened slowly. But she would not let him speak, stroking his face and touching and soothing him, as a mother does, though no man knows just how, and I turned and passed out with a heart as light as a feather by comparison with ten minutes ago.

Long before morning that house and its outbuildings were like some great shambles. Our own dead were laid out in rows in the barn behind; the pirates were left where they fell. Half the cottages were burnt, from the beach up to that of Dick Shon, and the rest were crowded with wounded, many of whom were women and children. The Black Lion also was full in every room with groaning sufferers, and in its coach-house lay ten wounded pirates, half of whom died before dawn. The tenants from the farms about, who had

not been able to reach the scene in time for the battle, now fell to helping us in tending the wounded, while my father had sent up a party to strip Dolgoch of everything that could minister to the comfort of the hurt ones. Never shall I forget that night. The wailing of the desolate, the moaning of bleeding women, the sharp, hissing breath through the clenched teeth of men who strove thus to repress their groans: all were awful to listen to. Yet I think it was the pitiful crying of the little ones, who knew no reason for the wounds that gaped in their tender bodies, which most unmanned us.

Day broke upon a ghastly scene, the street grisly with clotting blood and littered with rigid bodies right down to the water's edge. Two and ninety corpses of them we counted, besides those in the coach-house, and, alas! to these we pictured the forty of our own people lying in the barn, besides the calcined human ashes in the burnt-out cottages. The glamour of battle seemed to become a very tawdry spectacle in the cold light of that dawn as it pitilessly reached into the dim nooks and corners, exposing the whole horrid scene of blood and ashes; while out to seaward not a vestige remained of the great pirate ship. As for

myself, I shuddered as I remembered the feelings which had possessed me during the contest. To the now raw edge of my conscience I seemed to have been some foul deformity possessed by the Spirit of Darkness. You see, gentle reader, that was my first battle, and this my first counting of the cost, and the feelings that attend both are never repeated in a man through all his life, though he follow the trade of war till death cuts him short. By this time I had learnt all there was to know about the attack besides what I have already told you. It seemed that Dick Shon from the street had spied a ghostly vision of a ship close inshore, and, striding down to the beach, had reached the edge of it just in time to hear boat after boat grind on the shingle in landing till he had counted five. Then came a sound of men leaping ashore, after which the boats pushed off again, though he could make out only a confused blur whence the sounds issued. He decided at once that these were the pirates.

Turning to warn the village, his foot crunched away the stones beneath, and sharp at the sound came a challenge from the mass. Heedless of that, he commenced to steal away, when, to his dismay, he heard the rush of men and knew that

they were after him. I have said that he was worthy of the trust old Morris delegated to him, and now he proved it. Turning without hesitation, he waited till they came within a dozen paces, and then emptied his musket full butt into them. Next instant he fired both pistols in the same direction, and, never pausing, leaped against the mob with brandished cutlass, shouting in English, "Come on, lads! some of you capture their boats and cut them off," as though he led a new-come army.

The suddenness and audacity of the surprise made its success, for the foremost pirates, believing that the whole village was upon them, fell back at once upon those remaining at the water's edge, and, ere they discovered their mistake, Dick Shon was speeding along the street, wildly shouting as he passed each window: "Rouse out! rouse out! the pirates are landing."

This timely warning it was which enabled the cottagers to make so fierce a defence, and undoubtedly made it possible to beat off the murderous horde of cutthroats at last, though at so sore a cost.

Old Morris' story was even shorter. Coming home with the lugger, he was within a mile of the

strand when he first made out the "Wauhoo," as she ran up a single light in the mizzen stays. At the same time the flame first shot up in the village, and, without stopping to examine the stranger, he headed for a point some two hundred yards west of the boat landing, where the deep water came close in, and there, boldly beaching her, had led his crew at once to decide the fortune of the fight.

"And it was a rare thing Dick Shon went down when only the first half of the pirates had landed, or else it would have been all over before the lugger could have beached," concluded old Las.

My father also explained a thing which had puzzled me, and that was the apparition of Dew from so unexpected a quarter. When the stable lad rode up and roused the Hall my father had crowded all ten of the men on the place into the light carriage — whose horses were standing harnessed in the stalls — and half-way down the avenue had driven full tilt into a gang of pirates, — Dew and a boat's crew on their way to attack Dolgoch and recapture the Jewel. Of course the horses scattered them, and as soon as my father and his people began to jump down and lay about them, they bolted anywhere out of reach. Then the carriage

had started again for the gates, where the succours all formed up and my father led them with such effect over the bridge. After which, I suppose, Dew gathered his crew once more and followed, since he would believe that the wearer of the Jewel had now gone to Pwllwen.

"And he got the Jewel, after all, father!" said I sadly.

"Never mind that, Ivor. It is no good to him till he tries to use it. Then we shall see what Will Barry has to say in the matter, — that is," he added, "if the fellow was not blown up or drowned last night."

This last correction had reference to the fact that we had not found Dew's body amongst the slain. But I contended, and old Morris was inclined to back me in the matter, that Dew was still alive, and capable of giving trouble afresh. The pirates had used five boats of various sizes, and of these four remained on the beach in our possession. One, and as we judged, the largest, had got away crowded with men; amongst whom Dew must have been. Now, we had followed so swiftly as to give them no time to gain their ship and hide effectually from us, not to mention the improbability of their yielding the ship in so cow-

ardly a fashion. Therefore I judged that Dew, believing that the "Wauhoo" must be taken, had simply rowed on in the darkness; and we, having afterwards the glare of the ship between us and them, had failed to detect the boat out in the open sea.

With the sunrise it became possible to accurately total up our losses. Of my father's household four were slain outright and five were wounded, including Will Barry. Pryce Aubrey, whose death had so enraged me, kept company with Walter Tygwn, Evan Woodcutter and John Gardd. I sighed mournfully as I thought of them; the hounds would whine and look in vain for the coming of Tygwn — and would the forest ever be the same again without old Evan's axe, or the gardens so trim with John Gardd dead?

And in the village Dick Shon had just had his leg sawn off by the doctor, and half his left hand was lying somewhere under the blood in the street. Evan Landlord was dead, and Tom Ostler with him; and so on through a long and dismal catalogue. No wonder then that when the full of it was told to my father he turned his face to the wall to hide the tears that fell like rain, or that old Morris stalked away to the beach, and

there, straining his gaze to seaward, indulged his grief in his own way.

Before the sun was two hours high, help came pouring in from Pengareg and the villages beyond, and magistrates spurred in to assist my father in the matter of taking depositions, or as to any other point upon which they could be of service. The great tithebarn just by the bridge was cleared out, swept and garnished for their accommodation; and thither at length, after having first gone the round of the village, — "that place of blood and bandages," as one of them did call it, — they held a long sitting, with my father to direct them, and the first witness to be called was myself.

Of course I made no mention of the Jewel of Ynys Galon, and the affair was treated as a simple attack of pirates. The parish did not desire to have all the world prying into its private concerns, and Pwllwen had always loyally kept the story of Ynys Galon to itself, — just as a family will carry a high countenance before the world and keep its loves and griefs and skeletons for its own hearth.

Now, my story to the magistrates was a very good one as I thought, for I told them all about Will Barry and his terrible club, with the deeds of him which set my pulses leaping only to repeat

them. I told them too of the mighty axe, and how Evan Black Lion had wielded it: of the stubborn death of Tom Ostler: of the prowess of Dick Shon, and the might of Owen Vawr, the smith. And then I spoke with glowing pride of my father's gallant bearing, keeping my voice, as I believed, to a tone of due reverence. Therefore was I greatly grieved when he hastily excused my following the point of his own doings further; for, look you, I was but gotten as far as his first onfall, and had not yet had time to say so much as one word of all his high countenance in that last stubborn clashing on the beach. This disappointment did so much put me out of conceit with myself that I greatly fear I did scant justice to the bravery of old Morris Las. And I felt mightily hurt thereby, as I found myself stumbling through the few sentences that should have been a panegyric tripping as glibly from my lips as ever a Latin declamation did from those of Master Slimjeans, upon a speech day at school.

As I have said above, I did consider this to be a very pretty and complete relation of all that night's doings, and was greatly astonished when, at its conclusion, their worships flashed out upon me.

"What, sir! Is that all, sir? Have you nothing to tell of Ivor-y-Fwyall?" (that is to say, "Ivor of the Axe," meaning myself, whose first blow with that weapon had made such show that their worships had inquired of my father concerning it).

Then they went on to rally me, too, concerning the leap from the window, and many other passages which occurred, besides some that occurred not: from which I suppose they had been hearkening to wounded men's tales, whose vision and memory must have been confused, as I reckoned from what the magistrates quoted. And as I heard these things I grew hot, as one being made to appear foolish, and thereupon, turning to my father, I prayed his permission to depart, saying that I had not yet breakfasted, and was hungry. I even so far forgot the reverence due to him as to hasten away ere he could answer me, for I heard one gentleman say loudly to another, "So modest! Egad, sir! and in this generation too, when young men cock their noses at old-fashioned virtues! Gad, sir! Diaoul!"

So uncomfortable I grew at all this that I was fain indeed to come at the door which Huw Trooper opened. But I was not done hearing yet, for, as I passed out, their worships cried in a body, "Good-

morning, Mister Meyric," at which I was so astonished that I forgot to be angry till the door was closed, and it was too late to turn back and let them know that there was no such person in Pwllwen. Dolgoch there was, and Ivor Ap Griffith Ap Howel I was; but who this other person was — and so forth, etc., in my own mind, till I grew furious with wrath, and vowed that a decent, honest pirate was more to my taste any day than a dunderheaded magistrate. And to soothe my feelings I hunted up old Morris and demanded some breakfast, though this was past ten of the clock.

The witnesses examined were my father, the parson, Doctor David, myself and old Las, with the depositions of Will Barry and Dick Shon, by which list the reader will understand that our affairs were kept in safe hands, and all was legal and regular and pleasant — vastly comforting, indeed, to all the parish. For one thing, you see, the revenue officers had come down in a swarm, thinking themselves safe on such a day, and hinting that the place had been harried by smugglers. Now, the lugger was lying up, as big as a barn and as bold as brass, on the beach, plain for all folk to see, and crammed to the gunwales with contraband. But the magistrates soon gave these nosers to under-

stand that this was no time to interfere with honest men's bit of shifting for a living, and that a dead excise man, more or less, could easily be put down to the account of the pirates, and altogether, in fact — and here the gaugers took the hint and their departure together, while old Morris lounged on the crown of the bridge and opined in their ear, as they passed, that "there was some fine Hollands in Rhyd-y-voel now, he shouldn't wonder." Which hint, being in English and referring to an affair very mortifying to the preventive officers, caused them all to swear till their tormentor avowed that "they made a blue fog, which was wicked."

Then, towards evening, the lord lieutenant came coaching down with a whole host of deputy lieutenants, and the high sheriff to boot.

Said old Morris from the bridge as he watched them: "'Twas like as if Pwllwen was London Town when the lords ride in to Parliament and the King clanks in with the gold crown on his head, and all the archbishops sing 'Amen' solemn."

And jangling down at the heels of these came some old Morris sniffed at. They were soldiers come in haste from the coach town to protect, as

I suppose, the "aristocracy, nobility and gentry" at present in the village, for I sniffed also when their officer alluded in my hearing to his having ridden over to protect the "town." If he had said "Dolgoch" or "Pwllwen" I think I should have challenged him — which would have vastly astonished him, no doubt; while, as I opine, he would have collapsed completely had I referred him to old Las as my second, which I should have done, there being no one else handy.

Of course the notabilities were all to tarry overnight in my father's house, which was taxed to the utmost. Not that my father so much as turned a hair when Huw Trooper brought word from the kitchen that the bedrooms would hold no more. "What matter?" quoth he. "Diaoul! Has the stuff in my cellars lost its flavour and strength? The hall and its tables will dine a regiment, and as for bedrooms, Gad! I'll warrant there will be more of them sleep under the table than under sheets and blankets. It is the dinner I am troubling about."

"Never fear for that, sir; Mistress Elice is down in the kitchen," Huw Trooper answered assuringly.

"But I thought we stripped the house this morning," protested my father.

"And indeed, sir! how long were we to let the house be bare? Did not we send off the pack horses to the houses of the magistrates while you were sitting, and fetch home enough to plenish a garrison?"

"Gad! Huw Trooper: the whole country will be agog with a jest that Dolgoch sent round the hat for food when friends dropped in to dine. Diaoul!"

"Ah! but they will change that after you stretch the first of them. Your play with the rapier is too clean and pretty for the best of them: they will turn to saying that Dolgoch levied tribute, as his fathers did before him. And right, too, say I."

At which my father laughed, and shook the hand of the old veteran who had so relieved him of a difficulty.

"Mistress Elice," as my foster-mother was always called, was indeed looking after things in the house, for Will Barry was by now so far recovered that she felt justified in leaving him. In fact, as the doctor said, if it had not been for the weakness from his previous wound the crack on the head would have mattered little; but the weakness and the exhaustion consequent upon the fury of his exertions in the fight had made a serious

matter of what would otherwise have been of no moment.

"But he is a living miracle, none the less," persisted the doctor. "How else could he, in the state he was, leap out of that window and swing that brass club at such a terrible rate? It is a miracle!" and the brave old medico extended his snuff-box to his "brother-in-arms," as he called the parson after their joint doings amongst the wounded. Whereupon I begged that he would honour me also with a pinch; for an honour I deemed it, after last night, to take snuff with them.

Presently word came from my father that I was to dine with himself and his guests this evening, and accordingly, after asking my foster-brother for the hundredth time if there was not even a little thing more which I could do for him, I started off up the avenue, in high spirits at the prospect. Honours grew upon me, for, my room having perforce been given up to the high sheriff, my father led me into his own, wherein the lord lieutenant was arranging his toilet for the table, saying that I should have to use that for a dressing-room, where indeed I found all my new clothes set out ready to my hand. And, behold you! the great man him-

self turned at once upon my entering, speaking kindly.

"Ah, Dolgoch" (I should have said that his lordship* was cousin kin; his house and ours being from the same stem); "and is this our hero of the leap, our Knight of the Axe? A gallant sprig he is, and will be a credit to his name, like his father before him, I warrant;" and he pinched my ear till I felt very proud.

Moreover, when I had donned my smart apparel, French sword and all, my father put a fine ring upon my finger, and his lordship swore, with a courtly oath, that I was as proper a young gentleman as he ever saw, and that I ought by rights to be up in London with a commission in Somebody's regiment of Horse; adding, "It is a pity there are no ladies to dine with us to-night. Gad! I should like to watch them ogling for him." Whereat my father laughed, and I bowed myself out, with a face as red as fire from blushes.

At the dinner, too, I was placed well up amongst my father's kinsmen, coming betwixt the second and third cousins, and presently, lo you! my lord lieutenant sends word round that he desired I

* The use of this word leads to the inference that the gentleman mentioned was also a peer; possibly a certain Earl of Daugledd, as an almost undecipherable passage in the MSS. seems to suggest. O.R.

would do him the honour of taking wine with him. Diaoul! I was become a man with a vengeance. Then, too, when the cloth was drawn and the wine was going, there came a string of toasts, and amongst them all one to myself, no less, with words of praise to it, and laughs and cheers to greet it, making me so proud that I tossed off a glass to it myself, and we all laughed again at my mistake. And so many pretty things were said of me that you would have thought I was the Prince of Wales, or a deputy-lieutenant at least.

After all of which, my father, who had previously instructed me, made a sign, in accordance wherewith I rose and took my leave with a very grand bow to the company, pleading my duty, as having the care of the wounded in my father's necessary absence, and so left them to the potations customary to the gentlemen of that day.

That leave-taking, as I afterwards found, was so well carried on my part as to cause his lordship to swear roundly that I was wasted amongst such old fogies (meaning himself and the company), and that he would write at once to his cousin, the Duke of Flint, and get me a commission in a fashionable regiment. And moreover he kept his word, though that does not belong to this narration.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH I MAKE AN EXPEDITION AFTER TREASURE.

NEXT morning the lord-lieutenant desired my company for an airing in the garden, during which his clerk, or officer in attendance, brought for his perusal the report of the magistrates upon the harrying of the village. Dismissing the other, he sat down under the great oak, motioning me to sit also while he ran his eye over the document. Presently he began to read aloud my evidence, interlarding it with a running commentary of ejaculatory admiration.

"Fine! vastly fine! Gad, sir! Od's bodkins" (he was of the old school), and so on, finishing by producing his snuff-box and requesting me to honour him by exchanging with him. Then I was forced to confess that I was not yet come to that dignity of carrying one, whereat he laughed, as being tickled out of himself, swearing that I should have his in any case, and that he would wait for the exchange till I could send him one from Lon-

don (which I was afterwards careful to do, and had out a young sprig who vowed that it was a patch-box which I was intending to present as a love token to a certain fine lady, so elegant and modish a one did I take pains to procure). Thereafter he kept me by him till his coach was driven round for his departure, upon which at last coming to pass, I, at the door of the chariot, begged him to accept a pinch from "my" snuff-box; whereat he was so mightily tickled that my father forewent his astonishment and paid great heed when his lordship commended me as being a credit to him.

After this, at due intervals, departed the deputy-lieutenants and high sheriff, and presently we were left with only my father's kinsmen to let us back gently into the usual daily round of existence. If, indeed, that could be called usual, when so many of our people were gone forever, and so many more were maimed and scarred for life.

When the last coach was out of sight and the last soldier's coat had vanished, I made haste to find the doctor and the parson and exchange pinches of snuff with them, being eager indeed to have their praise and admiration of my new possession and the honour of it to me. And thereat we grew as courtly and crusted over the ceremony

as if we had been three fossils surviving from the court of two generations agone.

Upon this scene suddenly appeared my father, graciously requesting that he should be included in the function, and thereafter bursting out with a great sigh, "Ah, my son, if I only had the money which I spent up in London when I was a young springald, how well would we improve this opportunity for your advancement."

"Money!" cried I in fine disdain, as became such a favourite of fortune. "Sir! within a week, or ten days at farthest, I shall bring you the bowels of the Spanish galleon — I will find the treasure of Ynys Galon!"

"I wish you might, Ivor," replied my father with a dolorous smile, "for this affair has been most costly, and there will be so much the more needed now, with the widows and orphans and all in the village, poor things! and the cottages to build again for them. Heigho! Diaoul! I am becoming melancholy."

"Melancholy, sir! I will give you an admixture of mine own discovery which shall cure that same melancholy in a twinkling — exorcise it, sir, as the parson here would a ghost. Come, sir," and the doctor led the way inside immediately.

"I fear, however, good David, that the Spanish ingots would be a more lasting cure to my ailment," responded my father, as we went.

I did not follow to the dispensing of the admixture, lest perchance one should be concocted for me into the bargain. Rather I hurried off to delight the ears of my foster-brother with the recounting of this further good fortune. It is a goodly thing to come to honour, and a goodlier far to have a rare friend with whom to share the pleasure of it.

My father's words, however, stuck in my mind, and ere long I broached them to Will. He smiled sadly as I spoke of them, though the only word he said was, "It is a fine thing to be a young man in London, or to be an older man visiting the Bath every year — but it is a costly one to boot."

All this, as the reader will understand, set me very stubborn to go over and find the buried treasure. I could not, of course, go within the next two or three days, or until things should have settled down into something more like ship-shape. For instance, there were the burnt cottages to be repaired and their rude furniture to be replaced, as well as a plan of defence to be

established against any possible return of Dew. This plan was that, for the next two weeks, the tenants should come into the village with their arms every evening at the edge o' dark and lie in the great tithe barn to sleep, returning to their farms at daybreak. The lugger, moreover, was to be got off and taken to its usual hiding-place, and old Morris and her crew were to stay at home for the same period. Will Barry was getting on so well, that on the third day he was up once more, and by the sixth seemed to be quite recovered: almost as strong as before the knife-wound even. Therefore I had no longer any compunction in planning to load up the skiff and start for the island "to-morrow."

I made full preparation this time. Provisions ample for a week, not forgetting one long bottle of brandy against accidents, and half a dozen of sack as beverage. The sword which I had dropped in the fight had been found and returned to its old place at Will's bedhead, but in its place I took a short seaman's hanger. The great musket, of course, and pistols: carrying therewith good store of powder and shot. Besides all these, I took pick and shovel, drills, hammer and gad, an axe and several coils of

strong rope. To this assortment I added a numerous parcel of candles; and after surveying the whole as they lay snugly stowed in the skiff, I could think of nothing lacking save a supply of long nails, which I speedily procured — and then that boat was fit to set up a new Robinson Crusoe in another desert island.

All this was done in the evening of the sixth day, and my father even seemed to be struggling with a secret and, as he no doubt regarded it, fantastic hope that I might succeed.

Old Morris was to escort me to the island with a long boat full of Ap Morgans, as became my dignity, and after landing my stores, was to leave me to my own devices; for I had stipulated that I should be allowed three days in which to try alone, agreeing that if I then failed, I would come home and share in a joint expedition of us all. I do think that it was a belief in my luck, engendered by my wonderful good fortune of the last week or two, which prevailed to win the sanction of everybody to my assuredly boyish notion.

Early then, upon the morning of the seventh day after the attack, I took leave of my father and the others congregated upon the beach to

witness my departure, and set sail for the island; Mat Anthony steering the long boat and Morris Las in charge of the skiff, for he simply declined to let me sit unaccompanied in her. "No! no!" said he, "you may be alone after you land, but not before, Ivor boy."

Old Morris sent the long boat through the neck first to reconnoitre, and see that there were no signs of pirates about Treforgan. They soon returned, reporting all clear, and the skiff was at once taken in tow and speedily hauled through and made fast to the steps by the side of the harbour within. My equipments and baggage were next landed and stowed in the kitchen, and I was touched to find that my foster-mother, ever mindful of so heedless an one as I, had added a change of clothing complete.

The body of Dickson we found exactly as I left it, from which we argued that Dew, in escaping, had not touched Ynys Galon. Nevertheless, old Morris despatched half a dozen men to range over the whole island to make sure, while the rest lent a hand to getting the grisly body to the water's edge, and towing it astern of the boat out to sea to be there loaded with stones and sunk. Thereafter, a fire was kindled in the middle of

that room and damped with green weeds, so as to make a great smoke and thus cleanse away the foul stench which pervaded everything. This accomplished and all the men returned, old Morris produced a bottle of rum, and once more the Ap Morgans and I pledged each other, I, however, being by this time regarded with something approaching reverence, for old Morris had told them about the Jewel's return, and they had at once fallen into a belief that the long expected day was at hand, when they would take the places of their mothers people and I should come, in the course of nature, to be their covenanted protector, according to the compact with Morgan Ddu. For not one of them doubted the near recovery of the Jewel.

Then they were gone and I stood alone on the island.

My first care was to shoulder my musket and thoroughly explore the surface of the island; no long or intricate task, as it proved, for its main features were very simple. Take first a plateau, from two to three hundred feet high, and extending something like three miles from southwest to northeast. Let it be roughly heart-shaped and, upon the point of the heart, that is, the

southwest end, place a semicircular hill, rising about as high again. Crown this with a huge carn of stones, and let its convex slope fall steeply down to the cliffs, while its concave side opens to the northeast, half enclosing a little circular plain wherein stands a ring of giant stones, and, in the centre of these, one huge cromlech, some twelve feet square and three thick. From the immediate edge of the little plain, inland, let the ground fall sharply away in a close pent valley which, leading northeastward, becomes first a narrow glyn and then at its mouth a strait ravine; little more than a cleft in fact. Just before it comes to this, however, draw two smaller ravines one from either side, and let the waters of the three conjoin in a silvery little stream, which tinkles out upon a little harbour—that of Treforgan, to wit. Let the three glyns be almost impenetrable from tangled wood: scatter a few thickets of birch, hazel and mountain ash in any little depression of the general plateau: cover the rest with bracken, gorse, heather, short grass and such like herbage; here and there let a bare rib of rock show through, and in conclusion you will have a very workable outline of the island of Ynys Galon.

One other feature of it, however, requires special mention; that is, the Jaws.

Imagine the southwest point of the island scooped out into a little bay of perhaps twice the size of the harbour of Treforgan. Let the two horns of this be lofty walls of rock, whose original joining line has been dashed and washed away, ground down as it were by the ever gnashing sea below into a double line of grinning rocks, whose blackness stands vividly out amongst the white churning of the breakers surrounding them. Run a forked cleft in, till the top of its main branch from seaward opens to the grass roots of the crescent hill above; and in that cleft, and round those rocks, and in the space between, see, raging and roaring, tossing, rearing, breaking, spuming, a horrid hell of water, never resting, never ceasing, forever howling, gnashing in hideous rage; and that is what is known as the "Jaws of Ynys Galon."

Ynys Galon, however, as I have previously said, is not the ancient name of the island, and dates back no farther than the advent upon it of Morgan Ddu. Before his day it had always been known as Ynys Belre; whereby hung many and horrible tales. It was said, that in the far-off days, one

Belre, a gibbering hag of heart-shaking aspect, had dwelten upon it. She had a husband in a pitiless ogre, named "Nuada," who haunted the cliffs and rocks and treacherous seas about it, seizing and dashing to pieces any ship venturing within range of it, devouring the shrieking crews before each other's eyes, roaring and champing with a blood-freezing din, as his horrible seaweed-hung teeth crushed body and bones in bloody mass together. Sometimes he tossed a victim upon the island, where his devilish wife would seize upon it and drag it to the cromlech. There she would perform most hideous cruelties upon it, cutting up the body as butchers do a carcass, catching the blood in that cup-like hollow in the centre of the stone and drinking it; whereafter she would light a fire and roast the flesh before eating it, being so much more of a Christian than her husband, who devoured his raw.

But Urien Rheged, from whom the line of Dolgoch is descended, at last swore that he would no longer suffer their cruelties, and on a day he took ship from his royal court on the mainland; he being the stoutest king of his time. Sailing over, he slew Nuada in the seas, and then, landing at the harbour, caught Belre at her foul feeding, and forth-

with, after a short struggle, dragged her to the summit of the crescent hill and slew her; where the great carn marks the site of his justice to this day. Folk said, however, that though Belre was dead and her husband slain, yet the spirit of Nuada was doomed to welter forever in the range of his fearful cruelties. Therefore, he still dashed ships to pieces; still crushed the boats, still swallowed the seamen, but now without a body to be seen. His chiefest lurking-place was in the Jaws; as was shown by the never-ceasing rage of their waters, though he was wont also to lie in wait upon the rocks beside the seaward line of Trwynhir, which therefore were known as "The Teeth," and the whirl and suck of the seas behind became thus "Nuada's Throat."

It was from this old-world tale of far-off horrors that the Ap Morgans had named their ship "Nuada's Fleshhook," and called the stone circle "Nuada's House," because here the ogre had been wont to visit his hag wife; whose great stone they spoke of always as "Belre's Hearth."

All these dark and bloody tales flashed across my mind as I strode along the upland, but the day was too young, the sun too glorious, and the breath of the south too sweet for my soul to gather terror

URIEN RHEGED SLEW BELRE

at their sombre passage. Perhaps, also, the errand I was on had a deal to do with the full swing marking my pulses, and the old war song which I chanted as I went. It is a right glorious thing to be a boy and believe in buried treasures.

When I came to the little spring at the ravine head under "Nuada's House," I found it to be a bowl of solid rock, with a pent-house sort of crag for covering, and in its tinkling deeps—a full ell by measurement—I thought I could discern strange implements. "Perhaps," said I to myself, "though this bowl cannot well hold the galleon's cargo of itself, yet there may be something choice in here."

Thrusting my arm in to the shoulder and following that with head and neck, I reached down till I could clutch and bring up the things I had seen. Here was a strange find, indeed, but not seeming to relate in any way to what I sought. Two arrow-heads made of amethyst, unpolished; such amethyst as is found upon the Welsh coast. One javelin-head of bronze and two spear-heads of iron, caked together, and almost shapeless from rust. Not much indication of gold ingots in that. Dropping these cheerfully upon the grass, my hopes nowise abated, I stuck my head once more into the

little cavern above the bowl, and gazed again into its waters. Suddenly a strange, low moaning sounded in my ear, and a little breath of wind struck chilly on my forehead, the two together causing me to spring away and draw a pistol. So startled was I that it needed a full minute before my wits remembered that this must be the spring I had so often heard of in my childhood. For the old wives of Pwllwen had come to believe, like gospel, that the witch of the Ap Morgans had been a reincarnation of Belre's self, and that when she leaped into the Jaws it was because Nuada saw that the islanders were grown too few and feeble a folk to wear the mantle of his old dominion any longer. He had therefore called his wife to rejoin him, where she now tossed and moaned in ceaseless longing for the still greensward of the circle, thirsting for a drop of the sweet wave of this spring at my feet. And the noise which had so affrighted me was her voice, which now, as I thought of it, I reckoned melancholy beyond any harp tone I had ever heard. Nevertheless, "I would not be daunted," said I stoutly, to myself, "by any dead hag or witch of them all," and, cocking the pistol ready, I plucked up a short prayer for protection and cautiously knelt and peered in

again. In the rock behind, a foot or so above the rim of the bowl, were two parallel cracks, each an inch or so wide and a hand length from top to bottom. From one trickled the water, as I saw. The other was dry.

While I looked, the moaning burst again, rising into a sort of whispered shriek which struck terror to my soul. Shaking with dread, yet holding fast to my courage, I jammed the pistol hastily into the dry cleft and fired. The din was deafening, but it revived my spirit, and I yelled through the choking smoke in triumph, "Dead! you hag! I've killed you!"

Then I stood upright and shouted back along the glyn to the roofless walls and quiet waters of Treforgan showing through its strait mouth beyond, "Dead! Belre is dead! Aho!"

And, though it was the glory of a summer morning that showed around, yet I believed, right down in my soul, that my boast was true. And if I stood beside that circle now, with the wisdom and experience of half a century between, I should believe it again; of that I hold no manner of doubt.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF MY ADVENTURES IN THE JAWS.

PRESENTLY I remembered that I was here to hunt for treasure, not supernatural adventures, and, having first reloaded my pistol, I moved away to reach the carn of Belre on the hill-top behind. In spite of my vaunt I did not enter the circle, but kept outside to the southern horn of the hill and climbed from there. I found the carn one of the largest I ever saw, and with a little sitting place fashioned in its landward slope so that a man could station himself therein and keep a clear look-out over the whole circuit of the seas around. That this was the purpose to which the islanders had put the point I had no doubt, and accordingly I sat down in the hollow and took a sweep of the eye, lest by any chance Dew's boat might be returning. But I saw no sign of any sail, and ere long the roar of the Jaws below fascinated me till I craned my head over the summit of the carn to watch the waves below. As I did so, a

blast of cold air struck me in the face; a far stronger rush indeed than the puff above the spring. Moreover, this was damp with the salt breath of spray and alive with the regular pulse of dull booming surges, like the ghostly echo of the turmoil in the Jaws. The strangeness of it struck me greatly, and I pondered long and deeply as to what it might mean. The caves of the island were well known to be upon the southern coast, with none at all to the northward. This steady swing of ghostly seas could not come from them, for the waters raced smooth as oil and swift as fear along past the line of cave mouths, and so swept on to "The Teeth" and the line of Trwynhir. Only in the Jaws did the full breasting movement of ocean find itself cabin'd by the long armed cliffs till it leaped and roared in impotent anger. There must be some connection between that cauldron and this vent under my face.

Yet it was well known that there was no cave now in the Jaws. Formerly it had been held that the galleon was cast into the mouth of one there, but Morris Las had chosen a spring tide and steered a boat through the outer fringe of the grinning rocks (a thing which no man else

on that coast would have done even if he had seen the galleon's hull before him), and had come safely out again, saying that no cave existed. And thereafter he never attempted to make another search, choosing rather, as he said, to range the ocean for a new galleon than to brave the fast fronted cliffs for one lost long ago.

Nevertheless, I knew that he and all the Ap Morgans firmly and devoutly believed the cave in the Jaws to exist, but that the old witch at her death had, by magic, sealed it against mortal eyes till the Jewel should once more return to the desolate haunt of its past power. Now that Jewel had touched these shores again, for Dew had worn it when first Pierce Aros had steered him into the harbour, and been his guide and mentor in his subsequent rambles and explorations in the island. Being a boy, I had, of course, always believed in both cave and treasure, and naturally, as a result of my faith in old Las, believed that it had been hidden by the magic of the witch. This up-cast of wet air came from that cavern then; I was sure that I could almost smell the ingots of silver and the wedges of gold. Almost sure! I was certain! Would not the metal be covered by seaweed and caked with sea salt, and

was not this the very breath of seaweed and salt? Could anything be plainer? Not to me at any rate, for I think if I had been able to apply my eye to some orifice and distinguish the treasure in verity, I could not have leaped upright and shouted and capered in wilder uproar of sheer conviction. Oho! and everybody in the parish should be rich, and Will Barry and the Morgans should have a ship of such wondrous lines and speed as the King himself would envy. And we would all be happy, and the doctor should ride into Bath and flout his former traducers in a coach and four, with outriders, the parson sitting beside him to appreciate the pungent sarcasm of the remarks he would make. Get the treasure out of the earth, say you? Pshaw! that could be done in no time. Just toss the carn aside and follow the draught till the diggers reached the cave — the witch had forgotten this outlet and guide.

What a dull ditch life would be if it were nothing but a string of happenings, with no picturing forward of the things one would do; outlined in hope and crowded with warm detail of happiest beauty. A fig for the awakening moment: begin again!

Nevertheless, my exuberance received a little shock when, after tearing away the great stones of the carn, I came to the bare ribbed rock beneath and found but a crack, into which I could thrust my open hand only as far as the swell of the fore-arm. Stubborn yet, I ran to the nearest thicket and cut therefrom a slender ash sapling, some fifteen feet long. Returning with this, I sounded with it in the opening as far as it would reach, but found, to my huge disgust, only the solid frame-work of the mountain on either side. For twenty feet, or nearly so at least, the orifice continued as small and narrow as at the opening.

The blow was a very severe one! Twenty feet! that was far more than I could have digged out with drill and powder in a month. It was five hundred feet down to the cave below: years would be required for even experienced miners to sink a shaft so deep through the bowels of the hill. But the thought only made my faith glow more stubborn and savage, and I merely decided that I must think out some other way.

In a measure my thoughts must now start from some new point, and it occurred to me that, as my stomach was so pressing in the matter, this would be a wise time to eat. Accordingly I produced

from the pockets of my coat-skirt the luncheon they had carried, and fell to, my appetite no whit diminished by my rebuff. For, look you; it was something to have so clearly established the existence of the cave at all.

From where I sat upon the pinnacle of the island, the seaward slope of the hill fell very steeply down to the cliff top, which in turn dropped sheer to the water's edge. But the forked cleft I spoke of ran up through the cliffs and well into the bosom of the hill. Through it I could see straight into the wildest rush of the seething waves, and could estimate the better what they meant. And yet, as I reminded myself over and over again, old Morris had ventured into their grasp and had come out alive. True, there was no other man, perhaps, who could or would have done it, but still, for all that — in fine, the reader will see that I was arguing against my small stock of discretion in favour of braving a danger. The result of such an argument on the part of a boy just finishing a good luncheon can scarce need telling — as soon as the meal was ended, I rose and started back for Treforgan and the skiff. I was going to emulate the deed of the old sea-wolf and sail into the Jaws.

I remembered that this was a spring tide and would be top full by the time I could reach the point where I must make my attempt. Old Morris had done it on just such a tide. Nevertheless, I would not rush at the task in headlong foolhardiness; I would take all due precautions. Reaching the harbour, I set to at once to cut gorse, birch twigs and heather, wherewith to make a running fender extending all round the skiff, and especially thick and compact at the bows. I cleared her of everything loose saving my hanger and musket, which I took in case of meeting Dew's boat. I even left my coat behind, secreting the brandy-flask in my breast, instead of its usual place. Neither did I forget another prayer for guardance against the wicked spirit of Nuada.

And then I pushed off and pulled through the neck to the open sea.

Hoisting sail, I stood well out across the current till I had gotten sufficient offing, and then reached over for the foaming line at the southwest point of the island. Ere long I fetched abreast of it, and if I had not so thoroughly believed in the theory of the blow-hole above, the first near glance of what I had to face might well have daunted me or stilled a braver heart than mine. I dared

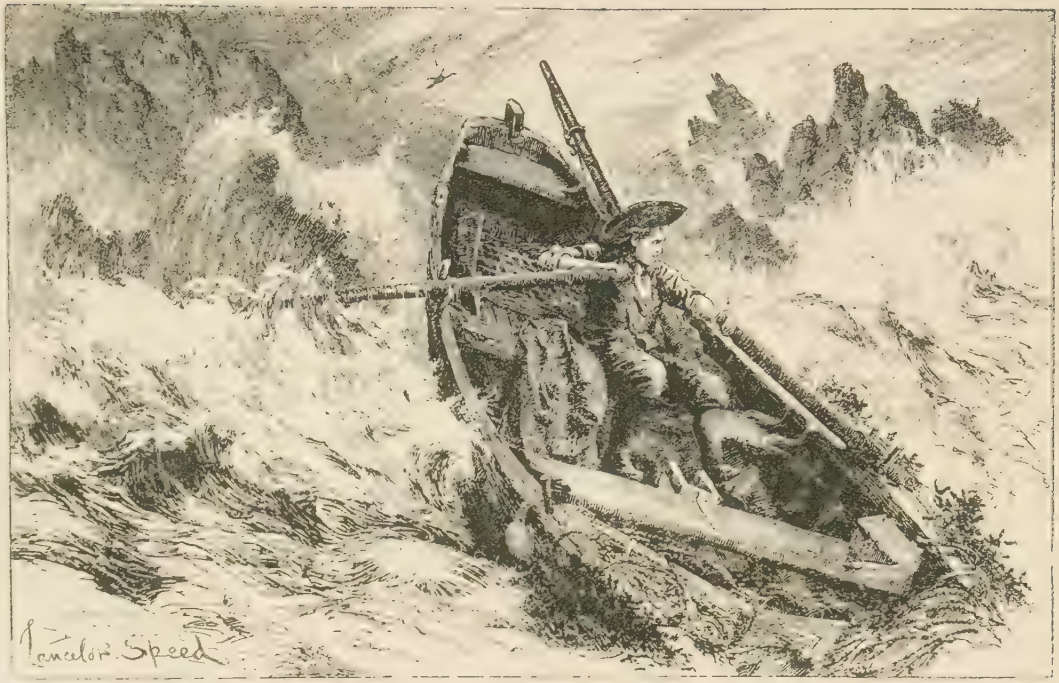
not let my mind speculate upon the consequences should things not go all in perfect order. Two minutes of such thoughts and, in spite of my boastful countenance on land, I should have fairly turned tail and fled. Shutting out all such thinkings then, I dropped the sail, took up the oars, and with eyes glued to the rocks before me sat amidships, face ahead, and set myself to keep the skiff in hand as the already quivering current began to sweep her inshore. With a little flutter at my heart I took line for a point right in the middle of the barrier, and where the serried pinnacles thinned to a gap just wide enough for oars to play in. A boat's length or so inward and the passage was barred by a jagged mass that threw the current into a forked wash on either hand, and it was this bent channel for which I was steering. My throat felt as if it were filled with frozen lead when I had come so close that there was no retreat. Strenuously did I pull astern to check the skiff's way, till the great roller I had marked advancing should lift her for the ride through that milk-white gut of flood. In that instant my heart-strings were nigh to crack with the suspense of it.

Then I felt the rise as the great, white-maned charger swung the little skiff upon its back and

leaped with a wild roar upon the weltering pinnacles. Blindly and wildly I pulled the port oar as I found myself amidst a hell of yammering, clamouring rocks, and all the world one cauldron of churning, rearing billows that gibbered and champed in horrible anticipation of the moment they should seize me from between those frail planks and toss me to howling Death. Sixty seconds of that, and my soul must have spewed itself out in very madness of terror, leaving my body a dead, undrowned prey to the clutches of Nuada: to the bosom of the undying witch: to the unplumbed deeps of the awful hurly about me.

Though I were to live forever, I should never forget the spirit-snapping strain of that passage. For I won through. I felt the blind oar grind along a rocky surface, I felt it swish through useless foam, and then, God be ever thanked for it! I felt the strong weight of deep waters and realised that I was beyond the outer barrier, and, for an instant, comparatively safe.

Dipping both oars to steady her, I found the skiff half full of water, and I saw, too, that there could be no attempt to bale her out; there were other rocks to be avoided, besides the uprushing swell that strove ever to fling me to the cormo-



IVOR ATTEMPTS THE PASSAGE INTO THE JAWS

rants on the ledges; midway to heaven as it seemed. Next instant a billow lifted her by the bows and the water rushed out astern till half of it was gone, and she rode lighter over the wave ere pitching into the gap — I cannot call it trough — on the other side. Another moment and a crest lifted from right beneath her, poising her amid as it flung her giddily up, and then, just as swift and just as straight, dropped us back again into a weltering ice-green bowl. Then a surge pitched us onward, and I could see that we were close into the mouth of the forked cleft into which I had so unmovedly gazed a scant hour or two bypast. With startling speed I found myself well inside, and saw, right in front, not a dozen lengths away, that the passage ended in a riven cliff lifting sheer up to the carn which I had desecrated.

One hope, and one only remained; the fork to the left, opening barely two lengths this side that way-blocking cliff. With one last little flutter of faith in Fortune, I pulled to guide the skiff into it ere we should be swept past. It ran at right angles to the other, and therefore I argued that the force of the waters would be less. Even as I rounded into it I saw my error and strove frantically to back out again. Too late!

Three lengths long only, and at the end narrowing to less than the skiff's own bows, with the cliffs closing overhead in midnight gloom. Then a swell whooped in behind me, poising the skiff for an instant, and I felt her shiver in terror ere she was flung fair into the very eye of the gulf. A roar! a crash! and I felt the boiling waters drag me down, and knew that I was in the very clutch of Death, indeed. These smooth rocks held no point for me to hold by: I had seen that already. My only hope could lie in living back through the cleft to the cliffs inside the Jaws, and there finding some ledge or foothold. Could I do that? What a mockery to cherish, when even here in this inner place the waters sucked me under and vomited me forth again in demoniacal derision of my strength who was so skilful a swimmer. But I fought hard. Breathless, choked with the brine, the swirling currents clinging to my limbs like bonds, I struggled still. Battered and bruised against the pitiless cliffs that mocked my despairing clutchings, I still strove. It is said that drowning men pass their whole lives again within the compass of its last minute. But I thought of nothing of that kind. All my mind was concentrated upon the battle to

reach the outer sea; to die out in the open at least, and not in this black trap. Nuada, whom I had prayed against! not Belre, whom I had defied!

And then, just as I began to think I must fail, I found myself washed into the main cleft with a rearing wall of foam charging straight at me. Madly I dived at its engulfing front, for if I were swept with that, I should be crushed like an eggshell against the end of the gut.

As I went in, the waters spread-eagled me and I felt myself swept backwards and upwards to the clouds as it seemed, and then came out on top, to find the billow climbing its last few feet of endeavour, with the ragged cliff face not more than arm's length away. Stretching both hands, I seized a little projection just as the foam trembled to the summit of its strength, quivering and pausing, it may be, for three or four seconds. Then, with a long-drawn hiss, it sank down, down, till I thought it would have sucked away the last drops of the sea and left the black floor of it to view.

And I was hanging by the grip of my hands, alone, full forty feet above.

My glance followed the back draw of the billow not more than an instant's length, yet the fascina-

tion of the depth began to fasten on me, and it was only with an effort I could lift my eyes to look aloft, where alone might I find a way of escape. As I did so, hope sprang up again, for just above the little protuberance to which I clung, ran a crack or crevice diagonally from right to left, and so broken and irregular, that I felt sure of good hold could I but once get grip of it.

Drawing a huge breath, I set my teeth, and, with a supreme effort, rose by my bent arms till my chin was level with the line of it and I could note the place for a hold. Dear God! I had it safe and strong, and so wide was it just there, that I could thrust in the whole right side of my length and, thus wedged in, could lie and gasp until my wind came again, and my heart beat steadier. Then I bethought me of the flask in my bosom, but in that position it was useless to me since I dared not let go my hold. Nevertheless, my courage rose as I saw how far back into the cliff the crack opened, for I argued that there would be other such fractures above, and perhaps a possible way up to the top. With new strength born of new hope, I loosed myself, and gently dropping over the abyss to the extent my bent arms allowed, began to work my way upwards.

I won seven feet or more along, and then found a little hold for my right foot, which enabled me to take breath again. The whole width of this stopped-up gulf was not more than five and thirty feet, and I was now within twelve feet of the left side of it. But even if I could reach the side, what then? I looked to see, and could discern that this cliff on which I hung and that which formed the side were nowhere in close connection above the point where the present fracture reached its limit. There was room for me to stand, could I but reach it. One more effort, one short prayer, one short struggle, and I had won, for I stood erect and firm within the opening I had seen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH MY DEDUCTIONS ARE FOUND CORRECT.

For full five minutes I stood stock still to rest, feeling a little thrill when each new wave weltered up the face of the cliff, as if it threatened to pluck me down out of the niche I had won. Yet none of them reached quite so high as the one which lifted me to safety. Up above me, the opening extended without obstruction to the daylight. I had my back to the side cliff, and to my left I could see that it was possible to sidle inwards for ten feet or so to a point where the two faces of rock came into rough contact with each other.

The line of that contact extended upwards and inwards as far as I could distinguish in the gloom, and I resolved to use its slope for my effort at escaping.

But first, I drew out the metal flask and took a long pull, for I could not still the trembling of my limbs, in spite of all my belief in my present

security. I did not even cough as the spirit passed my throat, and, moreover, felt mightily comforted and heartened by the warmth of it, and as I returned the flask to my shirt, I blessed the Giver of all good things for the gift of such a reviver. Then sidling inwards I found room to turn full front on, and was able to use every effort freely in the climb. It proved to be even less difficult than I had expected, and very soon I found myself at a point at least fifty feet higher than whence I started. Here, however, I found that I had come to the end of the friendly slope, and that the original opening extended straight back into darkness. There was tolerable walking along this level, but just as I was beginning to press forward impatiently, my foot struck a loose stone which seemed to drop almost straight down till, with a hollow thud, it struck bottom somewhere in a dense abyss that sounded hundreds of feet away. My breath fetched in a little gasp as I instantly halted. Pressing my hands against the opposite cliffs to steady myself, I felt cautiously forward with one foot, and a sweat broke out on my forehead as I found that another step would have hurled me into Eternity. The ledge was broken off.

Nevertheless, I trusted too much in the Providence which had halted me in time, to utterly give in now. Retreating again to the top of the slope, I looked up once more and found that the outlet was not more than thirty feet above me. Now the faces of the two cliffs were both of them rugged and broken, and continued at about the same three feet apart all the way to the top. The sight reminded me at once of a trick of climbing I had often practised in the days when I so worried the good old parson by my truantries.

Placing the palms of my hands, finger-tips downwards, against the opposing surfaces, I pressed outwards with might and main, till the pressure would support my weight. Then, with a little spring, I raised my feet and set them in like manner against the walls. Thereby I supported myself, till I could set my hands a little higher and gain a few inches nearer to freedom once more. By bending the body a little it becomes comparatively easy, especially when, as now, the inequalities of the two faces give so much support to the feet. Little by little I won upwards; bit by bit I rose, and ever the task became harder, and ever I became more stubborn. My hands began to bleed, but at a point where the passage became so narrow that I could support

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myself with knees and elbows, I slipped the seaman's kerchief from round my neck, and with teeth and hands tore it in two, therewith to wrap my torn palms. Then on again, with my heart hammering at my ribs from the exertion, but with my jaws set the tighter for that. And then, at last, my head rose slowly into the open, for the cliff I had first seized broke off just here, while the side cliff towered on up more than as high again. With one supreme struggle I clambered out upon the rocky platform and pitched forward upon my face, to lie without movement, till my slacked muscles could feel their strength come again.

At the end of that time I once more drew out the flask, and this time emptied it quite, for there was still a long and dangerous ascent to be overcome, though I had won through the worst. One thing, however, caught my attention as I rose: a network of giant ivy, bleached and dead, still spread itself around my feet and reached over the seaward edge of the rock. I did not stop to consider it just then, for I noted that the sun was come so low in the west that I should have scant time for the task in hand of reaching the grass above.

It was a sharp climb, but it grew easier with

every foot gained, till at length, with a fervent prayer of thanks, I found myself once more upon the crescent hill, with the half sun behind me throwing a long shadow all down the glyn, till it reached and blackened the little harbour at its mouth.

There rose a great triumph in my soul as I set my face to return to Treforgan. I did not think of the cave just then: I thought only of the thing I had done.

Hitherto old Morris was the only man who had ever dared the dangers of the Jaws. But now, I, Ivor ap Griffith ap Howel, had crossed the dreadful outguards of the place, and if I had not done so well as old Morris in returning, I was at least come out alive to tell the tale of it: I should be a man now, in very sooth and deed. And yet, somehow, I did not find my spirit so eager to claim manhood as it had been a week ago. Perhaps it was because the last three hours had really made me one.

I did not trouble to cook a supper when at length I passed into the kitchen of Ty Mawr. I fell to upon cold provisions and watered sack, and as soon as my hunger was satisfied, rolled out the blankets and fell into a sleep that lasted till the sun was four hours high.

Over breakfast, my mind reverted to the cave and the treasure. I was as certain as ever of the cave's existence, and, while I puzzled, the solution of the mystery came upon me like a flash. The dead ivy was the key of the whole. It certainly could not have grown upon that rock in its present position – the sea would have prevented that. Elsewhere it grew only upon the crest of the cliffs, rooting in the cracks of the upper strata and hanging aloft in great bushes. When that network of ivy spread itself over that platform, both of them were higher far than they were now ; so high in fact, as to overtop any other on the island. They must have stood in the breast of the outward slope of the crescent hill.

The old witch, at her death, must have compelled some great and awful storm whose charging squadrons of white horse had torn away its base and brought it, shattering and thundering, down into the cleft to cover up the entrance to the cave which hid the treasure — the treasure that had cost them all so dear.

Yet it had left an entrance only to be discovered by bravery or foolhardiness, and I had been the foolhardy one to find it. For I reckoned it Gospel proof that the stone I had kicked loose

had fallen into the very mouth of the cavern I was seeking. Stiff and sore and aching in every limb as I was, I still sprang up and paced about in a rush of excitement, too sober, however, since yesterday to shout or laugh.

A fever of haste took me; snatching up two coils of rope from my stores, I started at once for the glyn. The exertion and the weight, however, took effect to still my eagerness, and by the time I reached the circle of stones, I was quite content to go back and fetch proper equipment for the task in hand. Thus I returned and fetched hammer and drills, pick and shovel, and a long iron crowbar. Besides these, I took a great bunch of candles, with a little bracket for holding them, such as miners use. Lastly, I carried a store of provisions and another coil.

Arrived from this last journey, I chose a spot a couple of yards back from the cliff top above the landslide, and there drove the long drill full half its depth into the seam of the rock. Fastening one end of the longest coil of rope to this, I tied the tools to the other end and gently paid out the line till they rested upon the ivied platform half-way down to the sea. Loosing the other coils, I hitched them round the first and

let them follow the tools. Then, hanging the candles round my neck, I took the rope in both hands and backed over the edge, staying my feet by the line as I descended, for in this end of the cleft the rock front was not sheer as in all other places, else I could not have climbed it yesterday.

In my descent I noticed the wondrous numbers of the sea-birds screaming and circling about me, though, strange to say, during my escape I had not been conscious of even one of them. I suppose my mind was too full or too much shaken to heed their cries.

When I reached the platform, I lost no time in fixing another drill and making fast a second coil of rope. Lashing the crowbar and the last rope to the free end of this I lowered them into the crevice up which I had so hardly climbed. Next, I followed myself, with a turn of my leg round the rope to steady my going, and in another minute was standing in the narrow space with the slack of the line beneath my feet. Cautiously creeping inwards, I felt along until I came to the falling-off place, where I pushed the crowbar and third coil over, paying out the loose till it slacked in my grasp again, by which I knew that the load had reached bottom.

Lighting a candle now, I fixed the bracket in my hat, and felt no little daunted as its small rays threw into relief the dense blackness of the depths below. Then I twined my leg round the rope again, and began the last descent. The distance seemed interminable, and I could hardly stand off my doubts by repeating to myself the number of fathoms which I, of course, knew the rope to contain.

When I did reach bottom, the damp and the cold were enough to freeze the marrow in my bones, and I dared not let go my hold upon the rope till I had lit another candle and stuck it on top of a boulder a couple of feet away. Then I loosed the last coil of rope and, after making one end fast to the same boulder, took the loops of it upon my left arm and started forward into the blackness, paying out the line as I went in order to have a guide in returning.

Before I had slipped and stumbled along more than a dozen yards I struck my head against a rock face, and, holding the candle forward and aloft, discerned that I had reached what I believed to be the original cliff face before the landslip. Groping my way along this to the right, I felt my cautious pulses leap up in wild joy when, within a couple of

paces, I came upon the near edge of a seemingly illimitable opening, giving into the cliff behind. I tried to peer within, but my candle was a mockery in that more than Stygian blackness, and I made haste to mark the spot by lighting another candle and setting it upon the threshold. Then, holding with tenacious fingers to the guiding line, I pushed on again.

The ground fell away before me with exceeding steepness, and I wondered at first whither it would lead, till presently I remembered that during the great storms from the southwest, the sea must pour mighty floods up that cleft above and down into this pit, washing the shattered fragments of the under cliff into the cave. These smaller fragments had, of course, almost stopped up its mouth before the great mass from above slid down in front and prevented their being sucked out into the Jaws. This view proved to be correct; for, presently, I stepped out on to a firm floor, having a very slight slope upward, and here I set another candle.

As I did so I heard a noise to the left, which convinced me that there was a body of water in the cave itself; a body, moreover, communicating with the sea outside, for I could hear it lapping

and tripping in little surges upon its beach. Turning that way, therefore, I found the floor slope down again, and I was not surprised to come upon a space of water about a dozen yards each way, tossing in miniature billows, and showing by the peculiar boiling motion of one corner of it, next the cavern wall, that the way of its connection with outside was from a point at least four feet below its present level. Now, if that was so, then its surface would rise with the tide, and it became at once a matter of concern as to how far it would spread, and whether it would cut me off and drown me in this awful hole. There was need for speed in any case, and, setting still another candle here beside the pool, I turned to search the space inwards.

The floor itself was of solid rock, and I felt at once that there would be no digging to be done. To my intense surprise and disappointment, I found the cave to be not more than a sort of passage, some thirty yards wide and quite two hundred long, rising steeply as it went. I had come to the end of the line soon after leaving the pool, and had marked it with another candle. Then, going to the wall on the left, I started round, holding the light well forward as I went, and coming

back at length on the other side, to the candle sticking at the mouth of the cave. The walls had been as smooth and solid as a ship's side!

Puzzled and perplexed, I went again to the edge of the pool and stood, wondering how long my candles would last and whether the tide would cut me off, if I stayed searching as long as the lights endured. Loosing the rest of the bunch from my neck, I began to count them, when suddenly my hold slipped, and they dropped into the waters at my feet. I stood stock still for a moment, inwardly aghast at my stupid clumsiness. But there was no time for staring — already the candles burning were getting low, and I must either recover the bunch from the waters or retrace my steps at once and climb to the upper air; there to wait another day, for in all probability, the tide would rise in here and prevent my renewing the search till morning. The alternative was quite enough to decide me; hastily stripping off my clothes, I let myself gently into the pool.

I expected to find it very deep, and was therefore considerably taken aback to find my chin well out of water as I stood upon my tip-toes on a bottom of, certainly, the most peculiar formation I ever trod. It was close ribbed like the shores of

a sandy sea, but not with sand; it was as hard and firm as rock should be. I felt dubiously along with my foot and found that the ribs were in short lengths, in fact, as I told myself in a whisper, just like the tin and spelter ingots from the smelters at Swansea. Sharp with that word a light broke in upon me, and I split the darkness with a piercing yell. "The treasure! the ingots of gold! the bars of silver! I have found it! Aho!"

I was like a madman dancing up and down upon that stack of metal for a couple of minutes or so, till the sputtering of the candle at the water's edge reminded me of the lost bunch. At that I sobered, and, drawing the slack of the rope into the water, stooped under and hitched it round the end of one of the bars. Jumping ashore, I found the weight enormous by comparison with the bulk. Yet the frenzy in my blood tugged with me on the line, and at length I landed what was surely the rarest spoil man ever drew from the waters. Crusted it was with sea-salt, but my knife whipped a long scrape upon its surface, and I saw the yellow glitter of the great world's idol —gold!

I looked in wonder, and my soul sobered in a kind of blasphemous awe as I tried to calculate

the worth of that one single unit of the hoard. No wonder old Rhys Harries had laid so great an oath of secrecy upon his people. No wonder the dragons of "Nuada's Fleshhook" had foughten so fiercely! Here was a kingdom's ransom! a nation's price! For such a sum as this, leagues and alliances would declare war! With such a sum unscrupulous ministers might hire whole peoples of mercenaries to work out their ambitions. Placing my heavy sheath-knife across one end of the bar, I took a great stone and hammered it till I cut off a slice some half an inch thick. I was struck by the weight of even so little a piece, comparing it with the dimensions of the bulk below, and wondering anew over the whole affair.

Then, with hasty speed, I lifted the weighty ingot and cast it back upon the rest; half-believing that the splash-drops shining in the candle-light were gold also.

Swiftly as my trembling fingers could shape, I donned my clothing once more, and, with the precious plate of metal stowed safely in my breast, took up the bight of the rope and turned to go.

When I came to climb up to daylight again I

felt as light as a bird, and went almost as lightly, as if I had been really endowed with wings — at least, I cannot remember feeling in the slightest degree distressed or winded.

CHAPTER XIX.

"DEW!"

WHEN I reached the grass-roots once more, I drew the last rope up after me, loosing the drill also, and hiding both in the thicket at the head of the glyn, lest it should betray my secret in my absence. Also I restored the carn of Belre in order to hide the orifice above. For now an absolute terror, lest Dew should return before I could escape from the island, seemed to fill my bones, and urge me to headlong speed.

And I think it must have been the knowledge of the wealth which lay in my keeping that turned me to such a quaking poltroon. But the bright sun and pure air, coming after the horrible blackness of the cave, soon worked their natural consequences in my brain, and before I reached Treforgan, my courage had in a measure returned, and I was able to reckon up my situation calmly.

I had no boat, and my only weapons were a sheath-knife and an axe. To wait here alone on

the island was out of the question, and, as for leaving it, the only craft I could build was a raft. Now, a raft would not be a bad idea at all, as the currents ran so strongly in the direction of Pwllwen, but — there was one great danger to be feared: "The Teeth." If I could only keep wide of both the Teeth and the point of Trwynhir the rest was easy; but it would be a close rub if it were accomplished at all. Nevertheless, I must risk it.

Hastily gulping down a snack of luncheon, I took the axe, and started for the mouth of the glyn to cut four logs for a foundation. Floating these into the shallows, I nailed across them short lengths of sapling, and over those a layer of twigs and small branches. By this time it was dropping dark, and so I made the whole fast to the shore, and after selecting a straight and suitable young tree for fashioning into an oar, I carried it with me into the kitchen, and fell to preparing supper.

I had another bunch of candles in the corner, and with these I set up a regular illumination — wealth had already made me extravagant, I suppose. Also, I picked out the choicest morsels of my provisions to the meal; I was going home after breakfast to-morrow, so what did it matter!

Next I shook out the change of clothing, and set it to air in the ingle nook, for the clothes now upon me would have disgraced a scarecrow, much more one so rich as I, who would never stomach going home in such sorry guise. Then I made a hole through my plate of gold, and slung it about my neck, using, for carrying it, the ribbon wherewith my foster-mother had bound the clean shirt to preserve its laces.

After all which, I sat down and made a somewhat fastidious supper.

That finished, I took up the axe once more, and, with infinite labour, hewed out and fashioned an oar of mighty length and wondrous weight, all my notions coming upon me in such magnificent dimensions that night. Was I not wearing gold by the cake about my neck, with plenty more where that came from?

And when that oar was finished, I held it towards the fire and squinted along it like two carpenters, so clever did I feel myself to be. Further, when my eye could only discern the first four feet or so of its shaft, I affected to believe that it was because it was so well and truly fashioned, and not at all because it fell away out of the straight at so deplorable an angle.

Verily I was a great man standing in the kitchen of Ty Mawr that night. And so tickled was I with the figure I was cutting in the world, that I must have fallen asleep wearing a smile, to which that of an alderman over the toast list at a city dinner would be a pale grin in comparison.

So, too, I was as late in rising next morning as I had been after my tussle with Nuada in the Jaws. Yet I was as careful to make my toilet as if I were to meet another lord-lieutenant. My breakfast, though, was hearty, for I knew that oar of mine would need some handling, what with its own weight and the weight of the raft besides. Then I passed jauntily down the steps and cast loose for my voyage home.

Getting through the neck was a tough job, and at the end of it I was not quite so light-hearted about my safe arrival in Pwllwen as I had been in the harbour. Nevertheless, I sang a brave stave as the current seized the wallowing craft and began to sweep it away towards the huge front of Trwynhir. The oar became less of a joke with every mile passed, and I soon saw that if I was to escape wreck, I must work as I never worked before. Doffing my coat and hat, I

buckled to with a will, and soon the drops of sweat were standing large upon my forehead. Swifter and swifter the current swept us on, nearer and nearer to the looming danger we drew, and at last, I could no longer disguise from myself the certainty of striking the Teeth. All my frantic efforts to guide the raft far enough to clear those rocks ranking so pitilessly upon that broad ledge, availed me nothing in sea room; the current set too sure and strong inshore for me to stem it. One chance there might be, though I had never heard of even a boat attempting it, much less a raft. I might put forth an effort the other way, and try to fetch the inner passage between the Teeth and the cape.

To do so was easy, but hardly had I accomplished it, and cleared the "Inner Tooth" than I rued as sore as a man well can. I fetched a huge sigh as I recognised that here, at the entrance, the current was more like a mill-race in flood than one looks to find at sea. Then the waters seized the unwieldy craft and spun it round and round as if it had been a mere wisp of straw, and I set my jaws in a snap as the clumsy oar was snatched from my hands and drawn out of sight in a whirlpool. As it went, it stood upright, as straight as

ever it stood in the glyn yesterday, and I felt the gold on my breast chilling me like a lump of ice as my imagination anticipated a like fate for myself. And now, too, as if to mock my helplessness, a new current seemed to leap out from behind the Inner Tooth and sweep the raft straight across in a fashion to hurl it to fragments against the smooth cliffs that looked down in grim indifference from their five hundred feet of front. Then, just when my soul was shrinking in me from the near shock, the raft hauled off and, like some tantalising fiend, drove swiftly back again till, with a smooth, gliding sort of rush, it swung in a wide circle out and behind the Teeth.

Straightway my courage rose, and I was just beginning to congratulate myself, when crash went the timbers beneath me on a hidden rock, and I was flung, shoulder first, into the green eddy beside it. It was a stiffly rushing current in which I found myself, but it was strong and steady in one single direction, and I swung out with all my might to cross it and reach the black rocks rising so sullenly a couple of lengths away.

That was the toughest swim I ever did; for when the skiff was wrecked in the cleft, I was the mere sport of the seas and not a swimmer at

all. Here I was wrestling in grim stubbornness against the swirl, and so stoutly did I strive to boot that at last I won, and drew myself up to the rock I aimed for; between my gasps, thanking God for this present respite.

Looking back to see what had become of the raft, I saw that she had been sorely wrecked in striking, for one of the outer logs had broken away completely, while the next to it had so started, that it merely held by a nail or two in the crosspieces. Then wreck and raft had gone round together, till now they were wheeling short upon a horrible, sucking vortex in the centre. Being lightest, the one log was now nearest to the hole; and, even as I took the whole scene in, I saw the end of it dip as the end of the oar had done before it. Next instant the butt began to rise, but its mighty weight was too great even for that gurgling Water Fiend, and it fell massively across, striking the started log of the raft and driving it clear of the remainder. Then, as if it had accomplished Nuada's will, it disappeared beneath the green lips of the horror, which gulped it down and filled above it with a curl of mad-dog foam, that sent a shudder through my drenched frame.

"And that is Nuada's throat," I whispered

tremblingly to myself, as I watched the second log do exactly as the first had done, driving the third log loose from the shattered raft, ere it, too, was snatched under and the foam-wreath piled up again and sent another shiver through me. As with the second, so with the third; as with the third, so with the fourth and final one; and when, for the last time, that foam-wreath rose, I turned my face away, my hair standing stiff with terror lest the ages dead Nuada should stretch out a long arm from beneath and seize and suck me down, with the foam-wreath to mark my passing, and the stony face of Trwynhir to keep forever the secret of my dying.

The dread in my heart drove me to attempt to get as far as possible away, and, with a great leap, I flung myself half-way across to the next rock in front, from whence I could wade or drag myself until I stood at last on the exact spot where, as I suddenly remembered, the pirate boat had struck on the day they chased the skiff.

"Never mind," I muttered to myself, "better dead pirates than fiends that never die"; and I felt a strange sense of comfort in the words as I uttered them. Hatless, coatless, weaponless, yet till the tide should be full risen, my situation

was not utterly forlorn. Some boat might stand out from Pwllwen and discover me. Ha! yonder was a sail already, and bearing straight in for me! In truth I had been so absorbed, first in attempting to steer the raft, and next in escaping, that I had had no time to see this boat approaching until now she was not a quarter of a mile away.

But the longer I gazed at her, the surer I grew that her lines were familiar to me, and within five minutes I had recognised, beyond doubt or cavil, the boat I had seen wrecked upon the very ledge where I stood now. There was no mistaking her, loaded as she was to the gunwale with a crowd of men, and with a new brass gun on her bow platform. I was escaped from Nuada to fall into the clutches of Dew! What I had to expect at his hands, however, was a thought which pulled my wits so sharply together as to generate a stubbornness by the shock and warm my heart to action. Without hesitation, I made my way back to the rock farthest in: the one called the Inner Tooth. I would see how Dew could steer a boat where I had failed with the raft.

But the pirate was taking no risk he did not know. The danger of the point where the boat had struck before he had then gauged, and now

he steered to fetch abreast of it, and when within a length to fall gently away against the ledge under their quarter. By downing sail at once, and keeping oars and boat-hooks in vigorous play, they could do that with very little danger. Just as I had reckoned, so they came; and I admired the seamanlike way they carried it through: apparently Dew allowed no slovenliness in a crew of his. And all this time, not one of them ever hailed me or seemed to take the slightest notice of me; whereat I vaguely wondered. But as soon as they touched, and three or four boat-hooks had gripped them fast, their leader stood up, with a musket in his hand, and, in a cold and mocking tone, shouted across to me:

"Well, cousin! Glad to meet you."

Sure enough, he was a cousin, but I had never before thought of him in that light, and now I took it as an arrogant insult: my temper flared up almost as if he had struck me. So hot was I that I stood out in front of the rock and shouted back in defiance.

"You cousin to me! No cur was ever kin to Dolgoch. Come out on the rocks and I'll hammer you again as I did before, you cutthroat scoundrel!"

'CATCH THAT!' SAID DEW, TOSSING A PISTOL TO ME

Straightway for answer to that he clapped the musket to his shoulder, and I saw the cruel sneer on his features as he took aim at my legs. "As with poor Polwithy," thought I, pitying that great villain as a fellow-victim. But pride of my insulted blood would not let me seek shelter, and I taunted him again.

"You will never dare to stand on Belre's hearth, you sneaking murderer!"

I saw the hammer fall; the flash, the smoke; but the ball passed between my legs. Possibly he had aimed too true, and the bullet had kept straight which he had expected to go a little wide and break one or other of my thighs. At this my courage rose as high as my pride, and I defied them all to come out and take me. Then, to my surprise, Dew dropped his musket and called aloud to me, with a new and manly ring in his voice:

"Cousin, you are as brave as all our blood have ever been. Come you into the boat; I have a word to speak in your ear."

"Ah ha!" shouted I in reply. "Do you reckon us only fools, then?"

"Here!" said he, "catch that!" and straight he drew a pistol from his belt and deftly threw it into my hands. "It is loaded: look to the prim-

ing. Now you can shoot me if you will, or come and hear what I have to say."

So unexpected and so noble an action took me aback, and, like a breaker's ebb, my heat sank away, for I could no longer hold my anger against so fearless a trust of me. Could I let it be said that I allowed a pirate to outdo me in generosity and gallant courtesy? Nay, I was not proof.

"I am coming, Sir Pirate!" answered I. "Here is your pistol," I went on, as, reaching the ledge again, I handed it back to him, butt first.

He took it with a courtly bow, saying, as he bent, "My mother always taught me that a Dolgoch was ever a gentleman."

"Your mother! What name did she give you, sir, if such a question may become a gentleman?"

"Perfectly! She took it from Dolgoch, that it might crave a hearing for me some day. It is Meyric. I am Meyric Ddu ap Morgan; known in the Spanish seas as Dew!"

Now, I do confess that I had ever a weakness for a manly and gallant-seeming fellow; and here I felt my doubts as to any danger from him vanish, and, with a bow worthy of the occasion, I drew forth the snuff-box of the lord-lieutenant, and, extending it towards him, said: "Ah! I can-

not offer you a pinch of its contents, for the unmannerly seas have swamped it. Yet do but tap the lid, and it shall be deemed that we did exchange the compliment, good cousin." (Cousin! mark you, when but a moment ago I was ready to have run him through for that same word.)

"Ah ha!" replied he, with a smile, "a play upon my name. You have a pretty wit. Do but touch it. Lo! Dew does!"

Now, though this was so sorry a pun, and all unintended by me even at that, yet I was so mightily tickled at this conceding of a pretty wit to my possession, that I was ready to have gone bail for him to my father himself. Gravely I pocketed the snuff-box again, and intimated that I would now come aboard. My cousin was standing on the forward thwart, and I opposite him; but, as I raised to step across, the treacherous seaweed slipped from beneath my foot, and I pitched forward, in narrow danger of going under the bows.

The fellow holding the first boat-hook instantly let go his grip of that to seize me by the collar and haul me in. Unfortunately, as he loosed his clutch upon my rolling aboard, the crook of his tarry finger in the ribbon twitched out the plate of gold, and it shone in the sun with dazzling magnificence.

"The treasure! the treasure!" yelled the fellow, even as I had done before him, and instantly the whole crew took up the cry, and the rocks rang again with the mad shout of "Treasure!" Then the same rascal, with a fierce oath, demanded where I found it.

The answer he got took him all aback. It was Dew who spoke. "Horan, I reckon you're taken suddenly with something gone wrong in your stomach. When a man is feeling not so well we excuse him. But if the whole crew, too, are going to be not so well, catching it from you, I'll hold you for a Jonah and have you heaved overboard."

The tone of that voice was as smooth and as keen as a sword-edge, and I could see the rest shrink away from the object of it, as if he had been the plague.

That fellow was a bold one, though, for in spite of his obvious fear of the captain, he muttered again, "But that is part of the treasure."

"And what of that?" demanded Dew. "Didn't I tell you there was a treasure, and isn't that what you are all here for? You all swore to join me because I told you that. But I told you too, that I had the Jewel: this one," — drawing the Jewel from his breast and letting it hang by its chain,

even as the plate was hanging from my own neck, — "which makes me lord of the island, and that when I showed that Jewel, and could keep the island against all competitors, then the treasure would be mine legally, and that Dolgoch would protect me in the enjoyment of it, according to the old laws and customs of Ynys Galon.

"Then I promised you that you should all have fair share and share, according to the rules of gentlemen of fortune, and I don't think that there is one of you who doubts my word on that point. Is there?" he broke off fiercely. But no one of them was hardy enough to answer, and, after waiting for a moment, he resumed: "Well! very well; we have been fortunate enough to be of some slight service to my cousin," — here he bowed towards me, who graciously returned the courtesy for pure pleasure at his delicate way of putting things, — "which service, however, only serves to make the matter more pleasant, and does not affect the title to the treasure in the least; Dolgoch will be the first to admit my right to the treasure when I am lord of the island."

There was a pretty inflection to this last sentence, as who should beg of me to speak to the correctness of the assumption whereat I, as became

my importance, pooh-poohed! the possibility of the existence of any doubt.

"My cousin is most excellently correct, I do assure you, my good fellows! There is, of course, a certain function to be gone through; a mere ceremony perhaps, and seeming to your eyes to be a thing of little weight, and one easily to be dispensed with. Yet I beg of you to take my assurance that it is none the less necessary to observe it, as thereby insuring an absolutely flawless title. As you no doubt believe, I have seen the treasure, and I give you my word as a gentleman of some distinction, not only in his native place," — here I thought of the lord-lieutenant at the other end of the county, — "that the amount of it is quite such as to make it worth attending to the nicest details in securing a title to it." I plumed myself immensely upon the way in which I delivered so pretty a speech, quieting the crew, and at the same time giving a velvety hint to the captain that the treasure was not yet his.

And he took it as meant, for there was a subtle light in his smile, as he bowed his thanks, which showed how prettily he appreciated my standpoint. Turning to the men, he observed in his most fascinating tones:

"You see what it is to be born a gentleman, and to be able to give up so vast a fortune for so small a thing as an old custom, and to do it as well in so courtly a fashion as my good cousin. Gad! gentlemen, I grow prouder of him at every word."

The reader will observe that Dew had dropped his fo'c'sle English from the start, and was supporting his cousinship with all the graces at his command, even to the putting a gloss on his company of cutthroats by using their own euphemism of "Gentlemen!"

"And the ceremony" — prompted I, bowing acknowledgment of his mightily taking speech.

"Can be put afoot this very evening," replied he smoothly. Then to the crew: "Now, boys, oars out and give way lively till we get clear enough for the sails to draw us off. Lively!" He was the sea-captain again.

"For the island," he said briefly, in answer to the look of the steersman.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CEREMONY IN THE HOUSE OF NUADA.

Now though the crew had cowered before their captain, yet I could see their eyes flashing and flaming at the sight of the gold plate upon my breast, and I felt that with Dew out of the boat, they would have flown at me like wolves to tear me in pieces if I refused to lead them to the cave. I knew it from the first shout of Horan, and possibly that was why I had so readily appeared to fall in with Dew's suggestion of putting the ceremony afoot at once. I say possibly, for I own I was immensely taken by his address; his trusting me with the pistol and his evident power over these devilish "gentlemen" facing me. And yet I had not the slightest intention of proving false to my foster-brother. There were many things to be considered in my present situation, and perhaps the chief was, as to how far I could rely upon Dew's good offices. That is to say, how long would Meyric Ddu ap Morgan, with his

respect for the old laws, hold in check the buccaneer Dew; the terror of the Spanish seas. He was, of course, just as near in the island succession as my foster-brother, and if he should choose to have Will Barry bring over the rest of the Ap Morgans, and there, in the presence of them all, to take his chance in accordance with the old customs, why, the only objections I could advance would be on the score of my foster-brother's possible loss and the attack upon Pwllwen. Concerning this last, I felt certain that both Will Barry and old Morris, with the rest of their kindred to boot, would be very ready to find excuses for Dew, on the score that a man was justified in going any length to recover the Jewel. And that person himself could very easily point to the fact that he had not lifted hand against any man until he was stripped of the thing he prized so. Altogether, it was difficult to decide.

But, I asked myself, where were these cutthroats in front coming in. My stomach rose as I pictured them squandering the treasure in low hells and dens in the frowsy slums of Bristol. Come what might, I would have a good try to prevent such a sorry misfortune as that. At present, my hope lay solely in their captain and the power

of the old customs over him, and until I knew just what weight that power had, I could only temporise and trust to fortune.

Dew was looking ahead from where he lounged by the brass gun, while I sat on the edge of its platform, looking aft. The whole crew, however, were staring greedily at the plate depending from my neck, and thus I, alone, saw a thing which cheered me immensely. From behind Trwynhir, the sail of a boat flashed suddenly out and, after keeping its way for a dozen lengths or so, as suddenly put back and disappeared again. I knew that sail; it was the little gig of Pierce Aros, and, I doubted not, was gone to report the pirate boat's appearance and apparent destination.

When we came to the entrance to the neck, Dew himself went aft and took the tiller, and we went through by the sweep of the oars without the slightest trouble, in spite of her great size. Making fast to the rings at the foot of the steps, Dew gave a sharp order, and instantly half a dozen axes were produced and a move was made for the mouth of the glyn. There trees were felled and stripped, and I wondered to see how swiftly and in how workmanlike a fashion they brought them down, and, afterwards, how handily

they spiked them into the waters and lashed them together. It soon dawned upon me what was meant by a "boom," and I could see that when it was finished and made fast in the neck, it would be strong enough to bar the passage of a ship, let alone a boat. Evidently, Dew did not mean to neglect any precaution.

The place they chose in which to fix it was perfect. They did not fix it outside, nor yet in one of the crooks: they wedged it firmly a boat's length from the turn into the inner length, where it slanted into the harbour. That is to say, it would allow an enemy to come as far as possible into the trap, so that after fire was opened upon them, the distance back to the sea would preclude the slightest chance of escape. I thought of my father and his fire-ship plan, and shuddered.

Then tow saturated with pitch was got out, and made into balls with a double handful of powder in the middle of each, and tied just loose enough to allow of being lighted and thrown down into a boat before exploding. They made nearly thirty of these. After that they piled great boulders upon the edge of the cliff, just above the boom, and I noted that any one of them would have gone through the stoutest boat as if she were made of

brown paper. Lastly, a pile of torches was prepared, each slung by a lashing long enough to reach almost to the water's edge.

If only half the pirates were to lie ready, the whole of the King's navy could not have won through that gut.

Nevertheless, I did my best to appear unconcerned, and even made shift to find a word or two of praise in commendation of the smart manner in which they worked. Dew's influence must be marvellous, thought I, to make fellows of their kidney sweat like that. When it was finished their captain gazed at me with a meaning smile, but I looked him fairly in the eye for it, and answered boldly, "I thought you depended upon the old laws, sir?"

"Ah, yes; but your father and your friends do not know it, and if I didn't fix that boom to hold them long enough to parley, I might never find time to explain," replied he pleasantly.

"Why not send word over at once with your proposals," urged I, to that.

"Quite right; just so. But you forget that though I trust to the strength of the old laws, these men only trust to my word, and fear my anger. Which of them, do you think, would carry

the message? Or, if I were to go myself, how long do you think it would be before they triced you up by the heels over a slow fire, in order to get from you the secret of the treasure?" His position with regard to my proposition was as unassailable as in the other respect.

"And now, good cousin," pursued he, "we will get the ceremony under way. We must be by Belre's hearth at sunset, if I remember rightly. Is it not so?"

"It is," replied I; "but you forget that all the Ap Morgans should be by the circle to attend to it. What of Will Barry and the rest?"

"Pardon me; it is yourself who forgot. The words of Morgan Ddu were, 'all the people on the island.' Now, as the island was uninhabited when I came to it, I was forced to bring people with me to make the thing all legal and binding. You see I am well instructed on these points."

I thought what a rare lawyer he would have made, and admired his thoroughness. Moreover, it began to grow in me that he would stretch a good many points in order to keep strictly to the old customs — which he evidently believed to be printed laws, and set amongst the Statutes of the Country; though for that matter, so did old

Morris and his kin. One thing, however: I felt that it would do no good to remind him that it was my father who should attend, and not I, the son. Therefore I made the best of it, and said: "Very good; and now we shall have to hurry, in order to get to the spot in time."

He left five rogues of the crew to guard the neck, Horan and four others; from which I judged that these were the men least likely to be impressed by the coming scene, and that he intended to fix his power more firmly on the rest by means of it. Afterwards it was likely that Horan would follow Polwithy. Meanwhile, we marched.

As we climbed the glyn path, I saw by the faces of the crew, that they fully believed in Dew's position as he had sketched it in the boat, and regarded my ready acceptance of it as unshakable proof of its soundness. And, too, when we came to the spring, and I halted, pointing to it, and saying no word, they shrunk together as Dew stepped instantly forward, and, doffing his hat, knelt, and plunged his sword-point into the bowl, as the custom had been for all candidates since the death of Morgan Ddu. The glory of the dying sun made an eerie scene as it outlined, gleaming and flashing blood-red, the long stones of the circle, and the

sweep of the hill behind, throwing their bulk and shapes into sharp and dark relief. Then up rose the captain, and we passed across the little plain, till I halted at the two outer stones which mark the entrance to the ring. Here, without one word from me, and with as little hesitation as at the spring, Dew took the Jewel from his neck and handed it to me.

Turning to the men, I was almost startled to see the awe in their faces. Addressing them at once, I commanded them to take their places in the shadow betwixt the sweep of the hill and the line of the circle. They went like priests at a mass. Then, entering Nuada's house alone, I strode over to the great cromlech and laid the Jewel on its eastern end.

Looking to the entrance, my back to the sunset, I lifted my voice and cried aloud the old formula:

"Men of Ynys Galon! men of the keel and steel! Red Hands all! Hearken! The Lord of Ynys Galon is dead! Who will be Lord in his room?"

And clear and bold came the voice of Dew, speaking in Welsh, as I had done:

"I will be Lord of Ynys Galon!"

"Then come thou hither, son of Morgan Ddu. Lay thy hand upon the Jewel, and claim the right to wear it."

With a bearing so goodly to see that I grew proud of our kinship, and with the red light making his face all of a ruddy and unearthly aspect, he strode across to the cromlech. His right hand shook aloft his sword; his left he laid upon the Jewel, darkening its bloody rays below, the while his blade made crimson lightnings above. Fixing his gaze upon the point where the carn showed against the sunset, he shouted in a rapt voice that shook away all my distrust of him:

"I, Meyric Ddu ap Morgan, here claim to be the chiefest of the Sons of Morgan!"

Swift upon the heel of that I followed with the final words: "Hear ye! reapers of the sea's harvest! one claims the lordship over you. If any man of you deny his right, then let that one take up the challenge when, at sunrise to-morrow, he stands here to be invested!"

With the last echo of my words, that the sun might not disappear while we were yet within Nuada's house, we two turned and strode out of the circle, leaving the Jewel to blaze upon the cromlech and light the evil spirits, who, on such

a night, must troop from every side to hold their hellish revels in the ring. The evening ceremony was done.

Halting at the entrance, I bade the crew come over, and, as they obeyed, I noted how they were careful to pass round outside the circle. The expression on their features was such as I could not hitherto have believed possible with such villains.

There was a reverent awe and superstitious terror mingling in their look that more than justified the captain's idea in bringing them here. The unknown tongue had helped to deepen the impression upon them.

Then I led the way down the glyn to Treforgan once more, and the men closed up in a hurrying mob, casting fearful looks behind at every step. There could be no danger of any one of them stealing that Jewel in the night; they would as soon have stolen the eye of Satan himself.

When we reached the harbour we found that Horan and three of the men had landed the stores from the barge, as I contemptuously termed their boat, in mental comparison with my father's long boat, and that the brass gun had been landed, and now stood pointing directly into the inner slant of the neck. The sight of that, however,

instead of breeding despair in me, roused a stubborn ferocity of belief in the certainty of my near rescue. Dew, I knew, was no mean foe, as might be expected from his blood; but when I compared the rest of this crew with the men my father was to bring, — Will Barry leading Morris Las and the Ap Morgans, — I swore within my soul that there could only be one end to it all. Will Barry had said that he had a plan for capturing the island. I would back that plan, of which I knew nothing, against even these elaborate dispositions for resistance, any day.

So mightily did my own faith comfort me, that I sniffed approvingly as the odour of the nearly-cooked supper assailed my nostrils, and I was right glad to notice that they were no niggard providers. That old barge must have been as deep as she was long to have held so great a store of provisions, in addition to five and twenty cutthroats and myself. But Dew motioned to me, and we passed on through the kitchen and into the inner room. I watched his face narrowly, as he entered behind me, to see if his glance would seek for traces of his former victims, but he never so much as drooped an eyelid. So completely did he seem at ease, that I was half minded to tell him of my

adventure with Polwithy, for the pleasure of hearing him denounce that villain's story as a lie. I even began to believe that Polwithy had received his wound in a fight with Dickson, whom he had afterwards slain. I remembered that the one had repaid my kindness by an attempt upon my life, while the other had given me a pistol wherewith to shoot himself.

Without pausing, my companion led the way to where a sea-chest had been set out as a table, with a couple of kegs at opposite ends to serve for seats. Upon the centre of the box stood two gold candlesticks of the finest and rarest workmanship, halting my eye at once by their flawless beauty. Dew saw my arrested gaze, and smiled deprecatingly.

"Ah, yes, they are very fine. I got them from the Governor of San Juan Batista. I have treasured them jealously against this night."

Then I noticed, beside the candlesticks, a tall silver flagon, as fine in its way as the former. Dew explained again. "I got that from the Mission when I took San Paulo. The good Brothers ever like to take their wine from a worthy vessel." He might have been speaking of buying them in Cheapside, so courtly and deprecating was his

smile. I glanced involuntarily towards the kitchen, but he interpreted the look at once. "Ah, no! my villains know my little weakness, and they do not trouble these trinkets. It is unlucky to do so. These I have cherished in order that I might worthily entertain my protector at my installing. It is also my gift to him, according to the command of Morgan Ddu. They are yours, cousin."

So touched was I at his explanation, betraying as it did the depth of his resolves and the steadfastness of his hopes, that I could not keep from offering him my hand and bursting out, "You are a true son of Morgan, cousin!"

And I remember to this day the honest pressure of the hand he gave me.

The candles were burning, for it was already dusk, and at this juncture a dark, Spanish-looking fellow appeared, bringing in a savoury mess which he set upon the chest to flank the various appetisers already there. Dew seemed to have brought the elements of a royal feast, believing implicitly in the luck of the Jewel. Before we sat down he took from another and smaller chest in the corner, a couple of bottles of a rare vintage of Alicante, which he poured into the tall silver flagon, whence he filled two goblets to match.

"Can you drink to my success in this enterprise?" said he to me, and I caught so manly a wistfulness in his eyes, that I felt myself but a mean sort indeed in that I could not answer him in accordance with his hopes.

"Yet," said I, as I saw his face fall, "I can do this. I can drink to you for as gallant a man as ever followed the laws of Morgan Ddu, and I can say that if any harm befalls you, I shall ever remember you as you would lievest be remembered. And I ask you to think as little harshly of me as you can for my words, but in truth your rival is my own foster-brother."

Then he did increase my shame the more. "I love you the better for that, cousin. Not many men would have spoken the truth to Dew, the buccaneer, when he hoped for a different answer; and none could have so taken the sting from the words. Nevertheless, do you honour me by drinking to me as you may, and when supper is ended I will tell you a story to while the time."

His words and manner both so much affected me that all the health I could speak was "Heaven help you, cousin!" ere I drained it to the dregs. He bowed with grave patience to that.

So, too, I think he saw my distress, for he

motioned me to be seated and then set himself to do the honours of the board. Well and gallantly did he acquit himself of the task, and ere five minutes were past he had chased the melancholy from my spirits, and I was alternately laughing at some merry quip, or smiling in appreciation of some subtle turn of humour. Anon I would be poising my fork, in utter forgetfulness of it, while I waited to hear the upturn of some wild adventure or some churl stroke of fortune. He possessed that great advantage over old Morris: he could not only play a stirring part, he could recount it stirringly.

The reader is to understand that these accidents of Fate were all told of as appertaining to enterprises undertaken against the Dons or the French, and, as such, the natural enemies of Britain at all times; though upon occasions the King's ministers may deem it politic to patch up a truce and call it "peace."

And, moreover, Will Barry had already three times headed such expeditions against the coasts of Spain during the late war with that country. And this only by way of keeping the old blood in tune.

Then when the meal was ended, the same for-

eigner, whom my cousin called Dago, removed the dishes and replenished the candlesticks with new wax candles, leaving us thereafter to the enjoyment of the flagon and its contents.

CHAPTER XXI.

RECOUNTING AN ENEMY'S ENTERTAINMENT.

"Cousin," began Dew, "perhaps it will help you to understand me better if I tell you a little about my life. Anyhow, I am going to talk about it, for I feel like doing so. I have waited so long for this night, that I feel somewhat peculiar now that it has come at last."

And then he went on to tell me how he was brought up by his mother. From his earliest years she had filled his mind with the glories of Ynys Galon and its people; magnifying them with the loving extravagance of womankind, and picturing his own future life as lord of it. Mothers instil religion into their children, and this was her religion, and her son was the devoutest of believers. As he grew up she put weapons in his hands and bade him learn their use; for by them he must live, as his people had done before him. She allowed him to listen to the tales of buccaneering with which the Western Indies resounded; yet never

failed to express her scorn of those pitiful cut-throat rogues who found their prey in peaceful ships; telling him ever, that the Sons of Morgan fell foul only of tall treasure-ships or ships that carried the friends of Kings. Sometimes they had taken ships wherein beautiful ladies of Spain were crossing the seas, that they might have them to wife; but they had ever remained sea-wolves, not sneaking, snarling curs. Walled cities and close-peopled coasts they had harried, and they had ever thought more of meeting keen swords than of gathering the spoil.

In short, she had thrown so fair a robe upon the figure of her people, that the heart of her son was all ablaze whenever his mind rested upon it.

In her house she kept a kind of quiet state, as became the daughter of a king, which she held herself to be. In leaving Ulloth, she had seized upon sufficient of his ill-gotten hoards to keep her, and so the lad, their son, had been continually brought in contact with the governors of the island and their chief people. Hence the appearance of good breeding which he carried. Then, when he was a young man, she died, conjuring him with her last breath to take the Jewel and sail for Pwllwen. There he was to present himself and tell his story

in the Hall of Dolgoch, and ask my father's countenance for his claim to rule the island.

Accordingly he took ship, but the breath of the sea called his father's blood to life in him, and, when a buccaneer laid them aboard ere they were six days out, he threw in his lot with them, and so became the Dew whose name was a word wherewith nurses by the shores of the Spanish main terrified their charges into obedience.

Yet I was glad to remember the words Polwithy used, when that conscienceless scoundrel told me that his captain had never held gold for the chief end of his enterprises: rather looking upon it as something wherewith to reward his followers, and make the bravest of the buccaneers more eager to enlist under him aboard the "Wauhoo."

And here was another touch, for Dew hinted that he had avoided calling his ship "Cigfach Nuada" till he could sail her out of Treforgan harbour.

Further, he blazed into fierce wrath as he spoke of the hour when, at Pwllwen, he first heard of his father's cruel massacre of his mother's people.

All this he told me, I say, but I could never convey to any reader the charm of his speech and the fascinating manner of it all. So completely

did he cast the glamour over me, that my mind went charging about like a loose stallion, seeking some way of escape for him from the doom which I was so certain would befall his crew. More especially was this so when he referred to his disappointment upon the occasion of his first coming to Pwllwen and finding my father away. He touched very lightly upon his two encounters with Will Barry, and when he mentioned the attack upon Pwllwen, he stood swift to his feet and swore how good it had been to see the way we fought. With a ship's crew of such men, he would engage to make all South America pay its yearly tribute to Ynys Galon, instead of to Madrid or Lisbon.

And thereat I rose also, and looked him in the eye, for I was proud of my own people, and prouder yet to see how their prowess had moved such a one as Dew. His escape was easy enough, he had merely pulled out into the darkness and then gone back to Bristol. Knowing that his case with my father would be prejudiced by what had happened, he gathered a crew and loaded up the same boat as before, to defend the island with, until he could get parley with my father; after which, the Jewel in his hand would establish his ground.

When all his tale was ended, we both fell silent for a minute, and it was the sound of carousing in the next room which roused us from reverie. "Let us go and see how things are in there," said he, rising and leading the way as he spoke.

I followed him at once, grateful for the break in my embarrassment, and wishing to have another look at the villains over whom he exercised such an undoubted mastery. One glance sufficed to show that they were well under the influence of rum, partly following their usual habit, as I suppose, but much more from an eager desire to shake off the remembrance of that weird scene by Belre's hearth. Horan and his four were absent, being the first relief of the guard set upon the neck. Just as we two had crossed, however, and were standing with our backs to the fire in the great chimney, we heard a noise by the door, and Horan and his companions entered. There was a queer look upon the faces of the five, and I wondered to see them march defiantly into the centre of the room, while the leader strode further over and planted himself before Dew. It was plain at a glance that they were deeper in liquor than the rest.

Hitching his cutlass round suggestively, Horan

addressed his captain in an insolent tone. "How many devils are there aboard this island, anyhow, Dew?"

"Dew?" repeated the one addressed, with a rising inflection.

"Well — Cap'n Dew, then," growled the other.

"Five and twenty, if I count right," answered my cousin smoothly. Twenty-five was just the number of the crew, without the captain.

An unsteady laugh went round at that, and "One for you, Horan," called a man from the shadows.

This seemed to rile the fellow beyond bounds, for he blundered out a great oath and shouted, "You missed count, Dew; there's one here, the biggest devil that ever sailed, and that's yourself. And there's another out there — a dead one — a-floating and a-whispering up the harbour, and the moonlight's on his face — Polwithy's face! Polwithy, that you murdered! Blast you!"

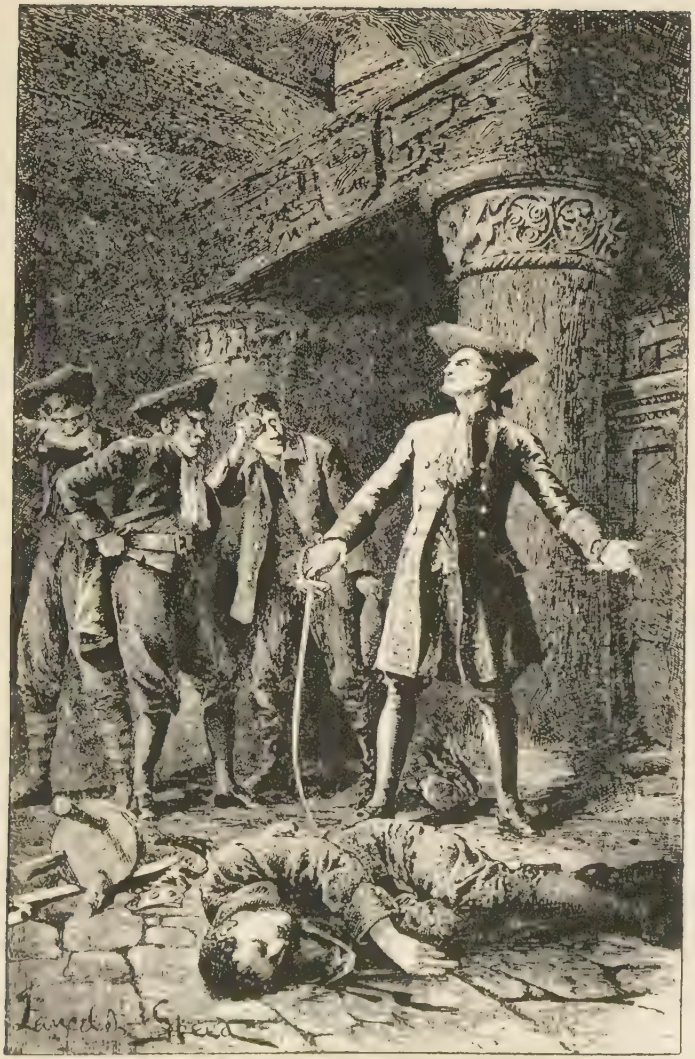
"That is a lie, fellow!" I struck in hotly. "I killed Polwithy, the scoundrel! He tried to murder me when I was taking him over to be nursed and doctored, so I shot him and sunk him in the neck, where you'll soon be to keep him company."

I never shifted an eye, but, none the less, I could see how straight they all sat up at that. As for the one before me, he staggered back a pace, till, seeming to do so from sheer confused bravado, he flung his hat in my face. My left hand stopped that; my right took him full and fair in the neck, and he fell with a thud at the feet of the four who came with him.

Before any one could move, almost before the senseless lump had dropped, Dew's sword was flashing and snaking in the firelight, but not keener or harder in its seeming than the voice in which he spoke.

"Take that," pointing to Horan, "and throw it into the harbour, to join Polwithy. Quick! or you shall be tied back to back, and go with him."

Just for one spell, while a man might count six, the four hesitated. Then that long sword flashed to the ready, and with swift terror they seized their ringleader and began to drag him out. The captain followed till he stood in the doorway and I beside him. Then immediately there sounded a splash, and I heard a long sigh of relief go round the room behind me. I do not now recollect reasoning upon it then, but at the splash, I remembered only that Horan was senseless and



DEW DOOMS HORAN

that I was the cause of it. I forgot that he was a pirate, and only remembered that he was a soul at the gates of Death. Swift as thought, I sprang to the edge of the harbour and leaped in. Coming to the surface, I struck out at once for the body, which I could see only a length or so away. Darting my hand out to clutch its hair, my fingers struck into a ragged hole in its neck, and with a half yell of horror, I dashed my hand wildly into the water ahead to cleanse it and to escape from that ghastly object, which the thrill in my bones told me to be Polwithy. The building of the boom had stirred the deeps and he had come grinning up, to make the harbour horrible with his grisly presence.

Horan had disappeared completely, and I felt sick; as if the water that floated the corpse were foul contamination. As speedily as I could, I regained the steps where Dew himself was waiting with extended hand. "The act became you, cousin; but it was necessary to punish him."

I did not answer save with a shudder, as I remembered the contact with the wound I had myself inflicted. He took it to be a chill from the water, and made haste to lead me inside to the fire.

"That was Polwithy I caught hold of," said I, in explanation, as I stood with my back to the hearth. "The devils are gathering from every cave and bush, every shadow and twisted tree; trooping to the house of Nuada in answer to the beacon blaze of the Jewel on Belre's Stone. And now the very dead devils are answering the call — Polwithy first, and next Dickson and Horan — the water will be choked with corpses coming in and up the harbour before morning." I was thinking of the coming attack and its probable consequences; but the men who heard, took it for some goblin effect which I was to bring about, as part of the ghoulish customs of this weird and fearsome island.

And I was happy in remembering that later.

Meanwhile, Dew ordered four fresh men on guard, making the old four sit well forward into the light of the fire, while he sat down to talk to them all.

He did not speak of their doings on the Spanish main, nor of anything which had befallen in their own day; but he went ranging back to the hoar days of this island on which they were now. He told of Belre and her hideous feasts; of Nuada and the shrieking of the crews as he devoured

them; of the thousands of dead devils and foul sprites that stalked the cliffs and glyns by night, and held special power and revel in the hours betwixt the sunset and sunrise, when the grim Jewel lay masterless upon the cromlech awaiting the strong grasp of a new chief. A hundred tales of dread he touched upon, which he must have learnt from his mother. I think he spoke of these things in order to impress the listening villains with an awe of a man who would choose to be king of such a place. For he gave them to understand that the spirits of Belre and Nuada would be at his command, as they had been at that of Morgan Ddu, to whom Belre had come again in the form of a witch, bound to obey and serve the chief of the island so long as the Jewel remained upon it.

When at last he ceased, it was long past midnight. Calling then, to four fresh men, he bade them go and relieve the other guard If he had named them for instant execution, I do not think they could have shown a greater terror, and it was only the fear of being flung to keep company with Horan that prevailed to make them obey at all. When they were gone, and the other guard returned, Dew bade them all good night, leaving

them as sober with dread as we had found them drunk with rum. "And hark ye; Cuttley, and you, Blunt, and you two also, Porritt and Pilling," — naming the four who had drowned Horan — "you will be ready to relieve the guard at break of day."

But not one of them could pluck up courage to answer us with "Good night!"

The Dago had lit fresh candles again, and now Dew brought forth another bottle of Alicante, saying, as he drew the cork, that it would fortify me against the chill. Then we both fell a-thinking as we sat; I, concerning some escape for him, and he, of the near fruition of his hopes. At length he got up. "I cannot sleep to-night," he said. "I shall climb over to that great boss of rock opposite, yonder; I wish to dream alone. There are your own blankets against the wall. Good night, cousin."

"Good night, cousin," I returned simply, holding out my hand. I like to remember that handshake.

But ere he went, he motioned me to help him barricade the doorway with the kegs and chest, and, when that was done, handed me his pistols, saying quietly: "Don't hesitate to use them if you

are attacked. I shall hear, and will come to help you. Good night, again."

Then, passing over the barricade, he stepped lightly across the sleeping crew out into the open, and was softly gone to meditations, which I devoutly hoped might include a prayer for his wild soul's salvation.

I saw him pass the harbour head, and plunge into the thicket that filled a shallow draw, or short valley, which gave the easiest access to the boss of which he spoke, though I knew it to be much farther away than he imagined.

CHAPTER XXII.

TELLING OF THE BLOODY COMBAT OF TY MAWR.

I DID not feel like sleeping any more than Dew did, but I stood by the window, watching the moon that rode so lovely in the heavens opposite. How long I kept my post there, I do not know, but I was roused by a rush of feet approaching, and the next instant the terrified guard dashed past, and into the kitchen.

"The corpses! the corpses!" I heard one trembling voice sing out. "D'ye remember, boys, the young one saying that gut would be full of corpses coming in? They're here, now! the gut is alive with 'em! Blue devils popping up from the bottom, and every one with a sword through him, and the hilt sticking out of his left shoulder."

"Then, that's Dew's doing 'cause of Horan," cried Blunt's voice, in answer. "He wants the treasure for himself, and so he's got this infernal younker inside to fetch these devils to eat us up, like that chap he called Neeata. He's gone out

of the way himself: I woke up as he went out o' the door. The young un's inside though, and I'm going to kill him first, before I'm done for — I'll take my oath on that."

"Me, too!" shouted Pilling, and at once I heard a rush for the barricade.

I stood stock still listening to all this, and now, just as the move commenced, I saw a figure rise from the stairhead outside; a figure all wet and glistening in the moonlight; a figure dressed only in blue knitted shirt, with dark small clothes, and stockings; a figure that threw up its right hand to its left shoulder, and from over it drew the long bright sword that I knew so well — it was the figure of my foster-brother.

Behind him crowded my father, and after him again, old Morris, and the Ap Morgans, and as they came, I shouted in wild triumph, "A rescue! A rescue!" Then at top speed, I was beside the door, pistol in hand, just in time to meet Blunt, as he burst away the barricade. The candles behind me were still burning, but I needed no light, for I did not pull the trigger till the muzzle touched his body. Straight at the report he pitched backward, while his fingers unclenched from the hilt of his heavy cutlass, which I had seized at firing.

But it was not one man's death that saved me. With the thud of Blunt's fall I heard the clash of sweeping steel in the kitchen, and, over all, my father's voice ringing out the old war-cry, "Dolgoch! Dolgoch!"

How my blood leaped up in answer at that summons to the grim joys of battle! It was no common fight hurtling beyond. Caught like wolves in a trap,—no exit save by the door through which, with red steel, my rescuers were pouring, the pirates fought with a desperation worthy of the men whose names carried unspeakable terror through so many coasts. Some had flung faggots on the fire to make light; some had lit torches and stuck them in the rusty brackets on the wall, or thrown them into the faces of the attackers to discomfit and dismay them. Others again held their links aloft, and all were ready to meet cut with guard, thrust with parry, or to answer the shout of challenge with the crack of pistol or the crash of musket. The kitchen was wide and lofty, and gave them good room for this, the last and hardest handplay of their blood-weltered lives. And well they profited by it. It was a bitter onset as ever befell.

Sword-blade and cutlass; half-pike and board-

ing-axe; I could hear them cling-clanging like smiths at anvil stroke. Every blow seemed to find an echo in my breast; the panted "Ho!" that came with each fiercer swing stirred me to frenzy. Then I heard a fall that seemed to single itself out from all the rest, and instantly Will Barry's voice followed through all the din: "Cover Dolgoch! Nuada! Nuada!" This lifting of their own battle-cry by Will and the Ap Morgans proclaimed them lordless, and meant that my father was down, and I forgot all other things in that.

"Cover Dolgoch!" I yelled in a passion of fear, as, with steel and pistol at the ready, I leaped through the doorway and fell upon the two who were guarding it. So sudden was I that I cut down one before he could engage me, whereat the other, Dago, fairly bolted. Then firing my pistol full into the teeth of Pilling, as he turned to meet me, I flung myself against the thick of them from the rear, repeating the yell, "Cover Dolgoch!"

Old Morris always swore this saved my father, for the pirates had bent all their energies to beating off his defenders, that they might finish him where he lay, as being the leader. But my onslaught took them so by surprise that they, for

an instant, gave back a full two paces, and as I dashed through I saw my father lying wounded, with Will standing astride his shoulders, torch on high and blade advanced, and Huw Trooper just recovering himself from a lunge which had reached its mark, as the trickling blood upon the blade showed. My coming seemed to make a pause, in which my foster-brother whispered to assure me that my father was not dead, while Huw Trooper dragged his master's limp form out from under foot and into the open. Since my father was fallen, I was now become the leader, whose right and duty it was to cry the old battle-shout and keep it farthest in front. But first I turned to old Morris beside me. "Dew is away on the South Cliff. Take a couple of men with you, and head him off at the glyn-mouth. Capture him alive, not dead! Do not kill him on any account."

Lowering his half-pike, all gouted like a butcher's poll-axe as it was, he nodded grimly, backing out without hesitation, and touching Pierce Aros and Mat Anthony to follow as he went.

Having thus provided against our being taken in rear by one who was a host in himself, I took a fresh grip of the hilt, and prepared to renew the dispute upon which so strange a pause had fallen.

Eleven men of the pirates were still standing, and there were eight of us. All this I noted, and then, bursting forth the war-cry in fierce pride of privilege, led the new onfall upon the sullen foe.

And first we lost Owen Tangae, and then Will Barry clove Cuttley to the breast-bone, and I took off the press till he could loose his blade again. Thereafter the blows fell so thick, and the blades gleamed so like red levin flashes, that there was no time to notice who gave the steel or took it. The floor was ankle deep with blood that steamed and bubbled, hot from the gaping wounds of friend and foe, and the smell of it was in my nostrils and the reflection of it in my eyes.

There was no chance of sudden gain of ground on that corpse-encumbered floor. With a stubborn hatred each party kept its line, and as one fell so stepped another in, and I found myself confronting a squat and massive frame of a scoundrel, whose blows rang down like flail strokes, almost beating my blade from my grip.

At last I got in and snicked loose the tendons of his leg. But that gain had like to have been my undoing, for instantly he came down to his knee, upon the topmost of two corpses between us, and his cutlass flickered up under my guard so

swiftly that only the spring backwards saved me. In that thrust he overreached himself, and ere he could recover to guard I was upon him, and, with a yell of "Dolgoch!" dealt him a stroke so stark as whistled through the half lift of his wrist, and shore his head in two halves that fell upon either shoulder as he dropped back.

Then I looked round just in time to see Rowland Hir run through the body, and to watch him hold his slayer's wrist till he brought down his own blade in one mighty death-stroke and they two fell down dead together.

Three pirates still remained of them and five of us, but now my foster-brother left the corpse in front of him and made so sharp an onslaught that he first forced the nearest to give ground, and then, ere he could recover, slew him as he staggered back. I myself took on the second: an earringed mask of a man with a scowl the most murderous I ever beheld; while long-limbed Glan-y-Mor drove the Dago back into the corner with a hurricane of blows, and there shent him of life ere he could make one poor pass in return. For myself, I foolishly allowed my eye to wander, noting, for his master's sake, the fate of Dew's servant, and only a lucky slip, whereby I fell backwards all my length, saved me from a cut

which would infallibly have swept my head off. But even as I went down, Will Barry leaped forward and, under the sweep of that cut, licked in with a lightning thrust that dropped the fellow as suddenly as if it had been a ball through the brain.

Just as I scrambled up, weaponless, and staggering blindly as I strove to clear away the gouts that clogged my eyes, a horrible Thing rose up from behind the line of slain. The lower half of its face was shot away, and one eye dangled from its socket above the ghastly cavern where the cheek should have been. In its right hand the Horror lifted a cutlass, and I went sick at my stomach as, by the dress, I recognised the form of Pilling, whom I had counted slain.

My blood seemed to freeze at the dreadful sight, and not mine only, for, ere the rest could recover themselves to action, this grisly remnant of a man had aimed a blow at my head. I stooped aside in time to save that, but the blade met my bent left arm, upflung toward it, and the pain of the long gash gave me life to spring away and avoid a second.

Then to this one terror entered another, almost as horrible seeming. For through the doorway in rear of us, his face divided by a sword gash, bitten

deep in across from cheek to cheek, staggered the gaunt frame of Morris Las. Swinging up his half-pike, he gathered his strength and rushed upon his grisly fellow. That one had stumbled half round, and ere he could turn again the shear of the descending edge hewed off the remaining upper portion of his face, and that fearful, featureless red front fell with a splash back to whence it had arisen.

Then from the mangled face of the conqueror came a sound that completed the unnerving of us, so unearthly and demoniacal did it strike the ear. Those sundered jaws could shape no words, but from the cadence I recognised it for that grim old pirate song:

> "Lay back your maintops'le,
> And your foresheet let go,
> For the plank and the plunge"—

But at this juncture the figure whirled round, staggered, lurched and would have fallen, had not Will Barry caught it in his arms and borne it out into the pure air and sweet moonlight without.

Once outside, Pierce Aros and Mat Anthony took charge of old Morris, while my foster-brother led me over to the doctor. I was surprised indeed to see, not only this last, but the parson as well,

for I knew they could not have swum through the Neck. But while the doctor bound up my arm, the parson explained that they had come in the gig with Pierce Aros, who had first landed them on the boom, and afterwards lifted her over and brought them on to the stairs. Then I asked concerning my father, and was fain enough to offer up a thanksgiving when the doctor told me that his wounds, while such as would keep him abed for a long time, were still not dangerous. It was the gunshot wound in the thigh that would tie him down.

With that, I took Will's arm and we went over to my father, who was calling me from the stair-head.

He greeted me warmly. "Oh, it is nothing at all, son! Just a hole through the thigh and a clip across the crown, and I am going to surprise old Doctor David: see if I don't! I am a bit weak from the bleeding, that is all; and how are you?"

"Only a gash on the arm, father."

"Ah, I am glad it is no worse, but did you kill Dew? I hope you did, now!"

"He wasn't in the house, father. I sent old Morris after him, but he came back all mangled."

It was Pierce Aros who came up while I spoke, and struck in now. "Yes, sir, we went after this Dew, and we did not wait long at the harbour head before he came a-running, sword in front, and not expecting to see us. Las called him to surrender, but he put himself a-shape to fight. Old Morris made to close in, but he stumbled in the stream, and as he was falling, Dew slashed him across the face. Then we fell on so handsomely that the pirate broke for the thickets in the glyn — but we were not fools enough to follow him there, so brought old Morris back again. That is all, sir."

"The scoundrel! Diaoul! We will hunt him down at daylight and I'll fling him into the Jaws. Gad, sir! it would do me good to run him through. He must be the devil himself."

"Nay, father! Hear me, sir! Dew is different to that," and forthwith I fell a-telling of all my adventures during the past day. I enlarged greatly upon Dew's history, and old Morris, who, having had his wound bandaged, was now lying beside us, shook my hand warmly when I spoke of Dew's faith and trust in the old laws of the island. I did not abate one word of any that I might bring forward in the man's favour, and lo!

just as I ended, I looked up and saw, standing within a yard of us, none other than the redoubtable captain himself.

And in a voice as courtly as ever, I heard :

"Thank you, cousin Ivor." His arms were folded on his breast, his sword sheathed by his side. Standing there in the moonlight, he was as comely a figure of a man as ever I saw, and so fearless and trusting that I knew he was safe. It would have been murder in us to have drawn blade upon him so.

Then my foster-brother rose up and stood before him, and my hopes died down again, for I knew at once that I must lose one or other of them, and I could not be false, even in thought, to Will.

It was Barry who spoke.

"You called my foster-brother cousin, but I am nigher of cousin kin to you than he is. You heard him pleading for you, and I think the better of you for what he has said, and the better yet for what you did for him. Do not think I hold any grudge against you for your knifing me in the forest, nor yet for the cracked crown you dealt me. I would have done all that and more to any man who had stolen the Jewel from me, and I

like the thing well in you. Neither for the attack on Pwllwen can I be keen, for I know you would be as sorry as we are if you could know all the mischief you wrought there amongst your mother's people. But there is a matter between us that only one thing can cure. All your life you say that you have looked forward to the day when you could be the chief of the Sons of Morgan. And yet, when you might have eased your longing, you turned aside to follow in your father's steps all the long years till now. Had you come home then, I could have fought against you, and, if I had lost, could have followed you freely as a true man, or died like one. But now I am of a sterner temper. Every year I waited I grew stubborner. You thought of your dream in the intervals of your enjoyment, but I nursed it day and night. Daily I prepared myself against the appearance of the Jewel, salving the fingers that had cramped upon a pen by closing them on a sword-hilt, as I practised for the meeting on Belre's hearth.

"You went ever with the power to decide each night whether to-morrow should see you land on Ynys Galon or no; and ever you dallied with the opportunity I would have given so much to have.

You had the Jewel to rest your dreams upon; I had only the sharp bitterness of hope; only the raw edge of faith, to hold me up. Daily did I tell my thoughts; not to another man, but to that which listens in grim silence as becomes the knower of a man's soul, and with each daily confidence my spirit grew stiffer. Would you care to know that one? Then bare this blade and see how sternly beautiful of aspect it is; of how matchless a temper." And here, God wot, my foster-brother extended the hilt of his sheathed blade towards his cousin, and that one, noble as he in the acceptance of the trust of the thus unarmed man, took it in strong clasp and drew it slowly forth, with all the deep delight of a brave man in a brave weapon. God's mercy! it was a sight to stir the pulse of any man to see these two, whose point of contact only the slaying or the being slain could settle, yet standing so gallantly and so invulnerable to any ignoble prompting in their alternate trusting to the generous faith of each other. But, the pity of it all! for the wide world holds not room enough for two such hearts, set upon obtaining the same desire. They brook no mandate short of Death's to cry their ambitions halt.

Then said Dew, quivering the blade with a turn of the wrist till it rippled like water under the moon:

"It is a sword enough to breed ambition in a stone, let alone a man cousin to me. You are right; I owe you reparation for the years that sword has bitten into your heart. And yet, my own blade is a worthy one to match it. I stormed a castle and sacked a walled town for only it, leaving my men to share the spoils as they would. It was a famous blade and I coveted it. Look you!" and in his turn he drew his blade and handed it to Will.

"Ah!" quoth my foster-brother beneath his breath, "it was worth the winning, if you had harried a kingdom for it."

Surely the moon never looked down on two ranker Pagans.

"It is well balanced, indeed," went on Will, shaking it out before him.

"Try a pass with it," urged Dew, guarding with the other's sword as he spoke.

Another instant, and the blades would have drawn sparks in meeting; but ere that could befall, my father rose to his elbow, and his voice burst forth like a musket-shot:

"Hold! Put up your swords at once, gentlemen. Diaoul! butchering one another for the glance of a blade, as the young bloods do for that of a maid! Shame on you both!"

Dew bowed at once, while Will seemed to have been suddenly called back from dreaming. Nevertheless, they took each his own blade again, and sheathed it. Then my father spoke once more:

"You must separate till morning; one of you to the waste, and one to tarry here. Choose at once!"

"I will go to the circle," answered Dew immediately. "I will pass the night at Belre's carn. Till to-morrow, then." He bowed to Will, and was moving away as he ended.

"One moment," interposed my foster-brother. "Will you not take a cloak? It is chilly before the dawn. Mat Anthony shall attend you, and carry it at your command."

"Aye, take both," pressed my father; and after an instant's hesitation the other consented. Three minutes later and he had disappeared into the glyn, his new attendant carrying a torch to light him through its black shadows.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCERNING THE CHALLENGE AND ITS RESULTS.

When he was gone my father looked at Will inquiringly, who simply answered with the word "To-morrow." He meant sunrise, but he had forgotten how near that was.

Then I demanded to know how they had learnt of my danger, and Will ran over the matter briefly.

As I had expected, it was Pierce Aros who reported the appearance of Dew's boat, and my father had at once set to work to effect a rescue. He hoped that I was in hiding somewhere in the waste of the island, and that an instant attack would hinder any search the pirates might be making, drawing them off for their own defence. But one of the foresters coming home from the wood of Trwynhir, had reported the wreck of my raft and my subsequent rescue by Dew.

Thankful for this, he had been ready to listen to Will's suggestions. Will, able to look at things

from the Ap Morgans' point of view, had guessed somewhat nearer the true state of the case, and believed that Dew was holding me for hostage till my father should consent to recognise his claim to the island. Accordingly, they must move warily if they were not to provoke my death.

Hereupon he had unfolded his plan.

Old Morris and fourteen of the Ap Morgans only were to muster to the attack, though the doctor was also to go, with the parson to help him in tending the wounded. These two were to sail with Pierce Aros in the gig; the rest in the long boat with my father. They were to put to sea as soon as it was dark, and fetch so great a compass as to come round from the westward, betwixt the island and the mainland, following the track of our adventure in the skiff. This because no watch would be likely to be kept on that coast, and all depended upon secrecy. Once within distance of the neck, each man was to strip off coat, shoes, and hat, and then to bind his weapon upon his back, over his left shoulder, and take to the water; swimming beneath the surface, and only coming up to breathe when necessary. Thus in spite of the torches and the lights, they had come

safely through, aided, as they now knew, by the superstitious terrors with which I had inspired the watchers.

Scarcely was the story ended ere a lark rose from the bent beyond and lifted his little clarion to herald the dawn. Prompt with the first stave of his carol, my foster-brother rose, and I with him.

"Will! Will!" cried my father, "be wary! Do not take any risks. Wait till you are sure before you put one in. God keep you, Will Barry!"

Then they shook each other's hands, and we two, with Pierce Aros and the doctor, struck out for the glyn and the house of Nuada. Hardly were we well into the glyn path before the east changed from black to dust colour, and ere we reached the roughest of the climb the earth was reflecting, wan and still, the pale beauties of the breaking light.

All the lift was ringing with the songs of the larks, when we paused to breathe beside the spring, and for Will to dip his blade therein as Dew had done before. A rosy flush was stealing along over bush and bracken like a robe of royal beauty, and the world was lying fair beneath the kiss of the new day. But under all this, I

remembered the corpse-cumbered kitchen of the house of horrors below, and I thought of the corpse which I so soon must see, when I should have spoken the word which was to set two swords in play.

At the entrance to the circle we found Dew and Mat Anthony standing, and, without a word, the rivals stepped inside and stripped to the skin. Still with no greeting, Dew strode over to the hearth of Belre, and while he went a shaft of glorious light sped past us as the new sun topped the horizon with radiant leap, kindling a red flame in the grim Jewel that rested on the stone. Swift at that — and without waiting my question, as he should have done — Dew leaped upon the cromlech, his naked arm holding his naked sword aloft. Then, still as a statue, he faced us, while I, with heavy heart, strode on alone to station myself at the eastern end of the stone. There he saluted me gravely, and I returned his salutation.

Plucking up my voice, I lifted the Jewel. "Ho! Red hands! The Jewel is masterless! Who will wear the Jewel of Ynys Galon?"

Instant, and with a concentrated determination ringing through it, came the answer:

"I, Meyric Ddu ap Morgan!"

"The challenge!" I shouted, "who takes up the challenge?"

Clear as a trumpet-call rang Will Barry's voice: "I take it! My blade is bare. I come."

Seven strides, and he was at my right hand; another, and he was on the stone, and the two blades extended in saluting. Falling back a pace, I waited till Pierce Aros showed with his levelled pike opposite, and then I gave the word:

"Nuada! choose!"

Forthwith there came the grind of a parried lunge, and then, quivering and gleaming like the play of forked lightning in a storm, the two swords hissed and clashed together, as thrust and blow fell on with bewildering speed. Though I had long known my foster-brother for the skilfullest of sworders, yet I had feared Dew was the warier, and my breath came in catches as I tried to follow the hand-play. Then, as it ever was with me, the sounds of battling bred the old heat, and my right hand went to my sword-hilt, while I was fain to shut my teeth with a snap, lest I should break unmannerly in upon the fray by cheering them on, as I longed to do.

For full five minutes they strove, with never an advantage to either, till, springing back to

avoid a thrust, Dew, forgetting the position, found only the air behind him, and he went down at full length, face upward on the grass. Instantly the long pike thrust in betwixt the two, and I cried "Peace!" By the custom, Will could claim the fight, but one glance at his face showed that he would never stoop to such an advantage.

"Cousin," he cried, "it is not a quibble of custom can settle this point. Come up again, and remember, this is Belre's hearth."

With a smile of fairest courtesy, as he sprang upright, Dew frankly extended his hand. "Thank you, cousin! I could almost find in my heart to yield to you. But that would be a poor ending to all your dreams," and he took the hand which Will offered to help him on to the stone again.

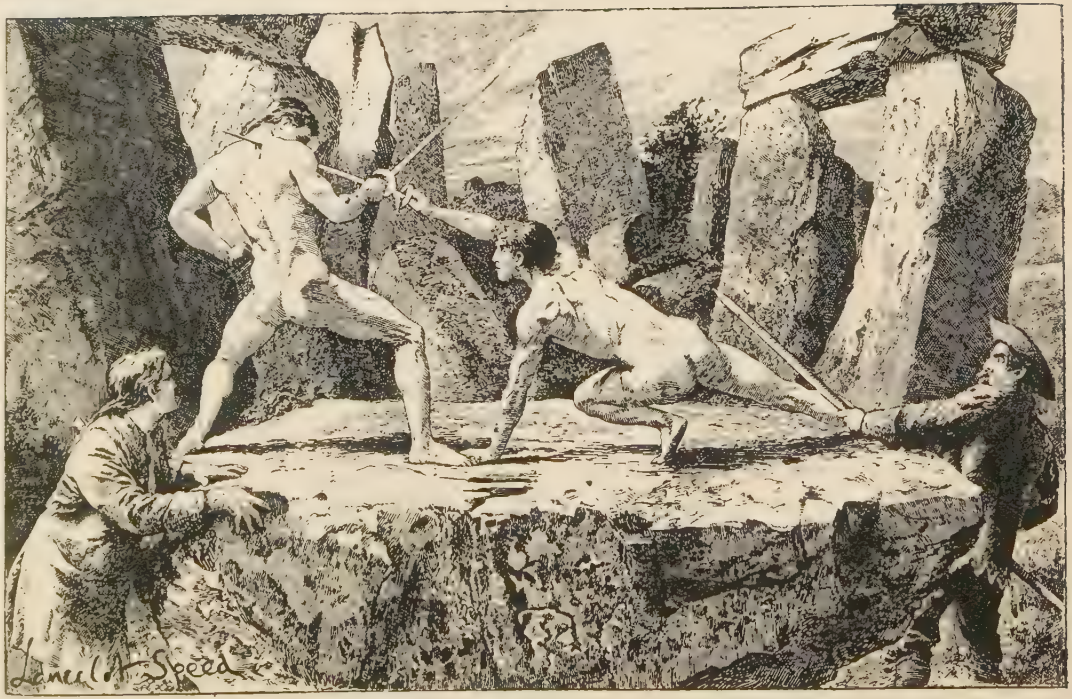
"It would have been a foul shame in me to have taken so mean an advantage, and estopped your chance because you forgot the straitness of the stone," concluded Will, as they took place again and once more saluted.

This time, though they fought more warily, yet they somehow conveyed a sense of determination that all the fury of the first bout had failed to express. There could be not much quartering in

that confined space, both for fear of slipping off and for fear of the level sun bedazzling the eyes. Then suddenly, — I could not see how it was done, but the captain's sword drew blood from a short thrust at the other's hip. Perhaps this quickened Will from having lost first blood. In any case, he answered it with a furious attack, the very suddenness of which tended to its success. For, within a moment, as it seemed, he had pinked his foe in two places, and the stone was slippery with the trickling blood.

It was the first time that ever Dew had felt a sword wound, and it stung him to a pitch of fury that distorted his features and showed itself in his play. For a brief space his strokes fell like hail upon the ceaseless shifting guard of his opponent, and, at length, had their reward in one that snicked loose the skin of Will's forehead, and dropped it like a curtain over his right eye. The sudden interference with his vision disconcerted my foster-brother, and he shifted to come full face, that he might use the other eye. But here the blood betrayed him, and he stumbled to one knee, with the left hand on the stone to save the fall outright.

I slipped a groan as Dew's blade swung aloft,



WHO SHALL BE LORD OF YNYS GALON?
WHO IS THE CHIEF OF THE SONS OF MORGAN?

with savage energy, to start a blow that should shear his rival asunder; but, ere it could fall, I saw the swiftest thrust that ever I looked on, before or since, and Will's sword pinked in between the ribs and striped out full half its length behind, while at the same instant he leaped upright, and stood to guard the blow that never should fall.

The captain's brand dropped clattering at his feet from the loosened clench; his body swayed a little, and then fell down full length across the hearth of Belre, while my foster-brother lowered his weapon—Lord of Ynys Galon.

Again, and for the last time, rang out the grim old challenge from the cromlech. But there was none to answer it, and so, placing his foot in the hole that frothed, rimfull, with blood, the victor bowed his head, while I hung the fatal Jewel round his neck.

Next, I stood and proclaimed him by his new title of "Will Barry ap Morgan, Lord of Ynys Galon and chief of the race of Morgan Ddu;" and Pierce Aros and Mat Anthony saluted him as their captain with the old fierce oath of loyalty. And the long years of his bitter waiting were at last avenged.

* * * * *

There is little more to tell.

The treasure was divided fairly, and my father once more stood free of debts and duns. Stretch by stretch, moreover, all the ancient lands of Dolgoch were bought back again, and the kindly system of our house inaugurated amongst their tenants and cultivators.

When my father and my foster-brother asked me to name my own share of the wealth, I put out my hand and laid it upon Dew's sword, saying that that was a thing of far greater worth in my eyes than all the gold of the cave. Whereat, they both shook me silently by the hand, and, when I shortly did receive the commission which the lord-lieutenant had procured for me, it was the sword of Dew which I bound about me wherewith to serve His Majesty.

Will Barry led the Ap Morgans, old and young, wounded and well, back to the home of their ancestors. The ruins of Treforgan were restored, and for three years they dwelt in peace till the elder lads had grown into men, and the race was once more strong enough to man the tall ship which they had built in the meantime. Then, in the autumn, with Will Barry commanding and old Morris at the helm, they warped out through the

neck, and shook their canvas loose for the hoards of gems and the cities of gold that beckon across the waters of the mystic seas beyond the Cape of Storms.

THE END.

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